

FOURTEEN
S E R M O N S

PREACHED ON
Several Occasions.

By THOMAS SECKER, LL.D.
Late Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

THE SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXI.



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to obſerve to do, all the Words of this Law.
For it is not a vain Thing for you: becauſe it
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S E R M O N I.

Preached before the UNIVERSITY of
OXFORD, ON ACT-SUNDAY in the
Afternoon, *July 8, 1733.*

DEUT. xxxii. 46, 47.

*And he said unto them, Set your Hearts unto
all the Words, which I testify among you this
Day; which ye shall command your Children
to observe to do, all the Words of this Law.
For it is not a vain Thing for you: Because it
is your Life; and through this Thing ye shall
prolong your Days in the Land whither ye
go over Jordan to possess it.*

THESE Words contain the last Exhortation, which *Moses*, the great Founder of the *Jewish* State, gave his Countrymen, on the very Day wherein he had Notice of his approaching Death. He had freed them, with infinite Danger to himself, from *Egyptian* Tyranny, and the worse Bondage of Idolatry and Superstition: he had received for them, from God's own Mouth, such Laws of Life, as in their Circumstances were most conducive to Virtue and Happiness: these he had delivered to his People,

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ple,

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ple, eſtabliſhed on the ſureſt Foundation of Re-
gard; affectionate Reverence to the Object of all
Duty; and Author of all Good: he had la-
boured, with infinite Patience, through a long
Course of Years, to cultivate in them this im-
portant Principle of religious Obedience: and
now, drawing near to the Cloſe of a Life ſpent
in their Service, he recommends it again; firſt,
with all the Force of a moſt perſuaſive Elo-
quence; and afterwards by every Charm, that
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by Heaven to learn themſelves, and teach their
Poſterity. This therefore he communicates
in a ſolemn Manner to the whole Congrega-
tion, as the Concluſion of all his Cares for
them; and then takes his final Leave in the
Exhortation of the Text, confirming once
more at his Death the Importance of thoſe Pre-
cepts, which he had been giving them through
his whole Life. *Set your Hearts, &c.*

Their own Obſervance of God's Law was
ſecuring the Felicity of one Generation only:
but educating their Children in Religion and
Virtue, this was perpetuating Bleſſings to each
Part of the Society and to the whole: laſting
Proſperity and Peace, in the good Land they
were going to poſſeſs; and in that *better Coun-
try**, of which it was an Emblem, *Life for
evermore*†.

* Heb. xi. 16.

† Pf. cxxxiii. 4.

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The Words afford then a juſt Occaſion for ſpeaking,

- I. Of the Advantages of right Education ;
and,
- II. The Duty of endeavouring, that theſe Advantages may be obtained.

I. The Advantages, and indeed Neceſſity, of right Education.

Other Creatures arrive, without their own Care, at the ſmall Perfection, of which they are capable, and there ſtop: but the whole of Man's Exiſtence, that appears, is a State of Diſcipline and Progreſſion. Youth is his Preparation for maturer Years: this whole Life, for another to come. Nature gives the Abilities to improve; but the actual Improvement, we are to have the Pleaſure and the Reward of giving ourſelves and one another. Some Minds indeed, as ſome Soils, may be fruitful without Cultivation; others, barren with it; but the general Neceſſity is the ſame in both Caſes; and in both, the richeſt, and moſt capable of producing good Fruit, will be over-run, if neglected, with the rankeſt and worſt Weeds.

Now the only univerſal Precaution, that can be in this Reſpect, Chriſtianity hath furniſhed, by introducing a ſtated Method of Inſtruction, unknown before; which, joined

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with the Parents private Care, is, to the Generality of Mankind, ſufficient for the Purpoſes of intellectual and moral Improvement. But to Perſons of more extenſive Influence, a more particular and appropriated Inſtitution is neceſſary ; for the World's Sake as well as their own. This, with regard to the Teachers of Religion, Men almoſt without Exception acknowledge : but too commonly forget it in another Caſe, of no leſs Importance ; theirs I mean, whoſe Authority is to enforce the Laws of Conduct, and whoſe Example to lead the Way in Life. Here ſometimes a wrong Care, often an imperfect one, is taken by the fondeſt Parents. The outward Accompliſhments and Decencies of Behaviour they teach them with great Exactneſs, and do well : but then, without the leaſt further Proviſion, ſend them abroad into the School of the World, there to learn what they can. The Conſequence is, what muſt naturally be expected : Trifles and Follies, ever readieſt at hand, and beſt ſuited to the unjudging Mind, get firſt into Poſſeſſion ; and, in many, leave Place for nothing elſe to enter. Such, unqualified for the valuable Employments of Life, muſt loſe their Days in the low Amuſements of a falſe and effeminate Politeness ; hoping for no higher a Character, than a Set of Creatures, equally contemptible, can give one another by mutual Admiration ; and happy after all, if they chance to preſerve an innocent Worthleſſneſs.

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But suppose Room left for some Attention to Knowledge; not even the Forms of decent Carriage, though obvious Things, are fully learnt without regular Application: what sort of Acquaintance then with Science must that be, which is picked up occasionally and by Accident? A thorough one indeed we must judge it, were the first Appearance to determine us; that Air of Sufficiency, with which a Person thus educated for the most part delivers his Sentiments. But if we examine, as the World will, what is under this Appearance to support it; then a Mind is discovered, thoughtlessly persuaded of its own Knowledge, where it is very ignorant; and affecting Knowledge, even though it is conscious of having none: first making hastily whatever Determination is fashionable, about Questions half understood, and not at all considered, be their Importance what it will; and then going on immediately to act upon this Determination, without the least Diffidence, or the least Thought what the Laws of human Actions are: unmoved by Reason, and scorning it; but changing frequently on mere Fancy, and fluctuating through Life without Rule or Guide, from the forward Extravagancies of a profligate Youth, to the End of an early and despicable old Age.

The Benefits of Conversation greatly depend on the previous Attainments, both of those, who are supposed to communicate

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Knowledge, and to receive it. If therefore Instruction be neglected, Conversation will grow trifling ; if perverted, dangerous. Still Acquaintance with the World, however corrupted, may be an useful Part of Education ; but then it must be the last. It gives a beautiful Polish : but of this the best prepared Mind will be the most susceptible. It teaches many Things : but good or bad, according as the Learner is qualified to distinguish. He, whom improved good Sense hath enabled to observe upon common Practice, will extract Wisdom and Virtue from the Vices and Follies of Mankind. But such as are ignorant, and capable only of imitating, will of course admire the worst of what they see ; and be the more effectually ruined, the more they aim to be accomplished. It is therefore a merciless Thing, to throw out poor Creatures, unprincipled in what is right, to shift for themselves where so much Wrong is to be learnt.

Regular Cultivation of the Understanding then is what good Education begins with. The earliest Branch of this, Acquaintance with useful Languages, unlocks the Treasures of ancient Learning, and makes the Improvements of every Age and Climate our own. Then the politer Parts of Literature most agreeably open the Faculties, and form the Taste of young Persons ; adorn our Discourse and endear our Company, in riper Years ; give a Grace to Wisdom and Virtue ; relieve the

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the Fatigue of our busy Hours, and elegantly fill up the Leisure of our vacant ones. At the same time the Art of just Reasoning opportunely comes in, to curb the Licence of Imagination, and direct its Force; to fix the Foundations of Science; ascertain the Degrees of Probability, and unveil specious Error. With this Guide we proceed securely. Knowledge of Nature opens the Universe to our View; enables us to judge worthily of the Constitution of Things; secures us from the Weakness of vulgar Superstitions; and contributes, in many ways, to the Health and Security, the Convenience and Pleasure of human Life. If from hence we go on to survey Mankind; a Contemplation of their different States in different Ages, and especially of their ancient Regulations and Laws, the publick Wisdom of brave and great Nations, will furnish Variety of useful Reflexions to the Mind: often teaching us to improve our own Condition, often to be happy in it.

It must be obvious, how rational an Entertainment these Things are; and how useful Materials they furnish, to ripen and perfect that Prudence and good Sense, which not only carries us through the Business of Life, but gives Relish and Stability to the Pleasures of it. If then Knowledge ought to be attained, the Way to it ought to be made easy; by removing Difficulties, cautioning against Mistakes, and leading forwards in a right Method.

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Above all, Application ought to be ſecured, by the Authority of a prudent Inſtructor; and Emulation excited, by a Number of Fellow-learners.

But if Education ſtop here, it hath only given Abilities and Powers, the Direction of which to right or wrong Purpoſes is greatly uncertain ſtill. He that knows not the proper Uſe of his own Being; *what is Man and whereto ſerveth he, what is his Good and what is his Evil**; may eaſily employ his other Knowledge ſo, as to be much the worſe for it. This Inquiry then is the important one. Various Methods of conducting Life preſent themſelves; contradictory Inclinations demand to be gratified: the Conflict is painful; the End of it may be more ſo: which Way is right, and which ſhall we take? Now there is a Science, that can direct us here: can ſhew us an inward Principle, endued with native Authority to govern all the reſt; Obedience to which gives a ſteady Aim and Self-approbation to our Conduct, beſtows on us the trueſt Satisfaction of Life, and delivers us from its moſt Evils. Nor are Morals only the Source of private Happineſs, but the great Foundation of mutual Security, the only one of Eſteem and Friendſhip amongſt Men. A Perſon of true Goodneſs, though otherwiſe of ſmall Accompliſhments, will always make an amiable Figure in Society, and be a valuable

* Ecclus xviii. 8.

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Part of it : whereas, without a virtuous Heart, the ſuperior Abilities of the great Man will only render him a more extenſive Miſchief; and the deceitful Agreeableneſs of the gay Man qualify him to miſlead, betray, and ruin, more entirely, thoſe with whom he converſes. Thus where-ever Wickedneſs increaſes, will Miſery increaſe alſo; till the End be univerſal Confuſion. For though a Conſtitution, ſinking under Vice, may preſerve for ſome time the florid Look of Health; yet inward Strength, and laſting Vigour, are what nothing but Virtue, publick and private, can give to any People. This is that true Wiſdom, *in whoſe right Hand is Length of Days; and in her Left, Riches and Honour* *.

Now the Foundations of Virtue are indeed laid by Nature, both in the Reaſon and Affections of Mankind, though fallen: but Reaſon is ſo often inattentive, and Affections are ſo eaſily depraved, that without further Care, thoſe moral Principles, which make the beſt Part of our inward Frame, will in moſt Men be greatly obſcured, and in ſome, to all Appearance, quite effaced. And, were even thoſe of righter Minds left each to form their private Syſtem, Tenderneſs for their own Failings, or Prejudice for thoſe of the World, would often lead them into imperfect Notions and wrong Practice. One indiſpenſable Branch then of liberal Education is an accurate Inſtitution in

* Prov. iii. 16.

this

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this important Science : to pull off the Diſguiſes which Vice affects to wear, and place the Conſequences of it in a juſt Light ; to point out the leſs obvious Advantages of Virtue, and ſhew its Reſtraints to end in real Freedom ; to repreſent the ſtrict Connexions of its ſeveral Parts, and make ſtrong the Proof, that *Knowledge of Wickedneſs is not Wiſdom ; neither at any time the Counſel of Sinners Prudence **.

And when ſhould the Science of Life be taught, but in the Beginning of Life ; before evil Habits are added to original Depravity : whiſt the natural Regard to Truth and Right, the only inward Reſtraint of incautious Youth, remains comparatively uncorrupt ; and the Seeds of Sin lie yet ſomewhat looſe on the Surface of the Mind ; much harder to be cleared away, when once they have taken Root, and twiſted themſelves ſtrongly about the Heart. This therefore is the favourable Opportunity, in which Authority and Reaſon muſt exert at once their joint Force. For Diſcipline without Inſtruction is mere Tyranny : and Inſtruction without Diſcipline, little better than uſeleſs Talk. Things owned to be fit and good are neglected, becauſe diſagreeable ; Things evidently hurtful purſued for preſent Pleaſure. Here Authority comes in to the Aid of Reaſon ; enforces virtuous Application ; reſtrains vicious Indulgences ; tempers the Warmth of Youth ; prepares us for the future Subordinations of

* Ecclus xix. 22.

Life ;

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Life; conducts us safe through the unseen Dangers of our most dangerous Time; and then by gentle Degrees withdraws its Influence, as the Power of Self-government grows up. Where Want of this Care leaves young Persons too soon in the worst of Hands, their own; it is dreadful to see, into what irretrievable Miseries they plunge, in the very Beginning of their Course. And therefore, the more Liberty they are afterwards to enjoy; the more prudent, though not stricter, Restraint they should be under at first; and entered by slow Steps into the World at large, with all possible Cautions given them of the Hazards they are going upon, and (God knows) have little Reason to be eager for,

But the most serious Part of Education is wanting still: the Part which leads us, by the Esteem of moral Excellence, to honour and love that Being, in whom the Perfection of it dwells; and extends our inward Sense of Duty, suggested first by the low and short-lived Relations between us and our Fellow-creatures, to the highest possible and eternal Object of it, the Creator and Ruler of this Universe. He, by whose Pleasure we are, from whose Favour all that we enjoy and hope for comes, according to whose Determination our whole Existence shall be happy or miserable, is not surely one with whom we are unconcerned. And, however a base Nature may value itself on the impotent Affectation of slighting God;
every

every worthy Mind will delight to express that Veneration, and pay that Obedience, which are due to Him, who is the Lord of all : due by every strongest Claim, whether unassisted Reason discover the general Laws of his moral Kingdom; or infinite Wisdom, the best Judge of our Circumstances, condescend to adapt to them further Obligations. It is indeed the Sense of our living under His Government and Care, that makes our Condition of Being desirable. Religion, filling the Mind with that Object which it naturally seeks, a sovereign Protector, infinitely wise and good, effectually excludes all superstitious Terrors ; and, far from depressing the tenderest Spirit, exalts us into every Thought and every Hope, that is great and noble. Turbulence of Passions, and Obstinacy of Self-will, these are the Things, that tear and weaken the Soul : Reverence of God, by awing them into Composure, strengthens every inward Principle that ought to be strong ; and if it prunes the Luxuriances, promotes by so doing the Vigour of the Mind. Religion comprehends at once every Motive, both of Virtue and of private Interest, that can either direct or support the Heart in every Part of Conduct ; joins in perpetual Union our Duty and our Happiness ; and makes the universal Scheme of Things consistent, beautiful, and good.

Surely then, Principles of such a Tendency ought to have an early and diligent Cultivation
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in every Breast; but theirs especially, whose Rank or Profession will make it of the most publick Consequence. They, who object against this Care, as instilling Prejudices, should consider, that Virtue, Honour, Decency, are Prejudices just of the same Sort; and think what would follow, were Men to enter upon Life free from the Bias of any one good Quality. But in Truth, God himself, not Man, hath planted these just Prepossessions in the Heart: and all that Education does, is to favour their Growth. Religion, and the Evidences for it, may indeed be unfairly represented by its Teachers: and what Part of Knowledge may not? But are only the Teachers of Religion capable of misrepresenting it? Hath not every vicious Man as strong a Motive to incline him against it, as even those maintained by it have, to incline them in its Favour? Hath not Fondness of Novelty, and Affectation of superior Sense and Learning, as great Influence on some Persons, as Credulity can have on others? Do we not every Day see Men determine positively against Religion, who are known never once to have thought of it in earnest; and attack it by all the unfair Arts in the World, whilst they themselves are declaiming against such Arts? Do we not see them even triumph in the Thought of its being false, though the everlasting Happiness of every good Man depends upon its Truth? And are these the worthy Spirits, to whose Tutoring young Persons are to be delivered over
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in their native Ignorance, for Fear of Prejudices? Or is it not on all Accounts wiſe and fit, that the Mind, whiſt untainted with evil Communication or Vice, ſhould have the moſt important of all Truths confirmed to it by proper Arguments; and be formed to the right and happy Temper, of chearful Obedience to the greateſt and beſt of Beings, *the Father and God of our Lives* *.

Since therefore Inſtruction of Youth in Religion, Virtue, and Knowledge, appears attended with ſo many Advantages; it follows,

II. That all Perſons concerned ſhould endeavour, with united Care, in their ſeveral Stations, that theſe Advantages may be effectually obtained; eſpecially in the Places dedicated to that Purpoſe.

The publick Care, in this Reſpect, we muſt ever gratefully own, continued through a long Succeſſion of our Princes; and flouriſhing ſtill in its Height, under the Adminiſtration of a King, zealous for the Happineſs of his People, and reſolute to maintain all the Rights of all his Subjects. Next to whoſe aſſured and experienced Protection we cannot but graciously acknowledge the gracious Munificence of his Royal Conſort; therefore bountiful to Religion and Learning, becauſe ſhe moſt intimately knows their Value, and moſt affectionately eſteems them.

* Ecclus xxiii. 4.

Secure then of the publick Favour to whatever is connected with the publick Good ; we have only Their Attention to solicit who are personally interested : Parents, or whoever supply their Place ; the Conductors of Education ; and, the young Persons to be educated.

To you, who are Parents, Nature itself hath given a tender Concern for your Childrens Welfare, as your own ; and reminds you justly, that, as you have brought them into the Dangers of Life, your Business it is to provide, that they get well through them. Now the only Provision commonly attended to, of Wealth and Honours, can never produce Happiness ; unless the Mind, on which all depends, be taught to enjoy them properly. Fortune, without this, will but lead them to more abandoned Sallies of Extravagance ; and Rank expose them to more publick Censure. Education then is the great Care, with which you are entrusted ; scarce more for their Sakes than your own. You may be negligent of your Son's Instruction : but it is on you, as well as himself, that his Ignorance and Contemptibleness will bring both Reproach and Inconvenience. You may be regardless of his Morals : but you may be the Person, who will at last the most severely feel his Want of them. You may be indifferent about his Religion : but remember, Dutifulness to you is one great Precept of Religion : and all the rest promote such Habits,

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as you may bitterly repent, when it is too late, your Omission to cultivate in him; and live and die miserable on his Account, whom timely Care would have made your Joy and Honour.

Parents therefore should always be Friends to Education, and to Places of Education: should wish well to them; and never, without great Reason, think ill of them. The Enemies of Religion and Virtue, an increasing Number, will of course be Enemies to those who teach them; and the more so, the more carefully they teach them. The Enemies to either Part of our happy Constitution, will look with an evil Eye on Establishments, designed for the Support of both. More private Motives will excite injurious Treatment of them from some Persons. And even those of better Meaning may be engaged, by Misinformations and Prejudices, to pass harsh Judgments and say unfriendly Things. But reasonable Men will always distinguish, by what Person, on what Grounds, with what Temper and what Views, disadvantageous Characters are given, or Reports raised. They will also consider, that the unhappy Divisions of this Nation cannot but have caused, on all Sides, in Length of Time, some Degree of wrong Opinion and wrong Conduct towards one another; mutual Jealousies and Misunderstandings between those, whose Interests, and whose Intentions, were in general the same: Differences, which
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it muſt be ruinous to heighten, dangerous to continue, uſeleſs to paſs Judgment in; but moſt important to reconcile, by ſuch Conduct on every Hand, as may give no Suſpicion of ill Deſign, but all Proofs of good. Friendly Methods will not fail to unite the Hearts of Men; and make them ſuſceptible of mutual Advice and Improvement, Aſſiſtance and Benefit. Whoever will view the Seats of Learning, with theſe Conſiderations preſent to his Mind, will judge favourably concerning them; and not only admire the pious Bounty of our Anceſtors, who dedicated theſe delightful Retreats to Knowledge and Virtue, founded theſe beautiful Structures, enriched them with ſuch amazing Treasures of Literature, and provided ſo nobly for the Accommodation of fit Perſons to enjoy and communicate the Inſtruction of them; but be thankful for the many and great Bleſſings, which they have conveyed to every Age, and will, we hope, derive to lateſt Poſterity.

Ideas of Perfection are viſionary Things: but look into Fact, and where will thoſe, who inveigh againſt the Education of our Univerſities, recommend a more improving one? The indulgent Softneſs of the Parents Family is apt, at beſt, to give young Perſons a moſt unhappy Effeminateness; the Governor, if he hath Abilities, hath ſcarce ever Authority to inforce Diligence; Want of Rivals keeps the Mind languid; and upon the

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whole,

whole, ſeldom any Thing conſiderable comes out. If now the contrary Method be taken, of ſending them, raw and uninſtructed, to viſit foreign Countries; what Improvement will Minds unprepared for Improvement make there? As to Religion; the Diſuſe of frequenting its Exercises, and the daily View of its Corruptions, will be in Danger of effacing all regard to it. With reſpect to Morals; in the Miſt of ſo great Temptation, ſo little Reſtraint, and ſo general bad Example, it muſt be a high Degree of Virtue, that can keep itſelf in Countenance. Then for ſuch Opportunities of Inſtruction, as different Laws, Manners, and Customs, may be ſuppoſed to give; theſe require a Mind trained up beforehand to Attention and Judgment. On all others they will be juſt as likely to make wrong Impreſſions as right, if they make any: but indeed what Impreſſions of all kinds are uſually made, and how far the Improvements brought home answer the national Expence for them, lies within the Compaſs of daily Obſervation.

If then, in the next Place, we compare at leaſt foreign Universities with our own: is their Theology worthier of God, more conformable to Reaſon and primitive Chriſtianity; is their Philoſophy juſter and more ſolid, leſs full of Imagination and Hypotheſis; than that of our great Countrymen, whoſe Names I need not ſuggeſt? Will the ornamental Re-
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wards of Learning be more fitly beſtowed, where no Time previous to the Application for them is required? Will Induſtry be more univerſal, without any Inſpection over it; Behaviour more regular, without any Rule ſet to it; than where young Perſons are formed into orderly Societies, diſtinguiſhed by proper Habits, reſtrained to proper Hours, obliged to proper Studies, and watched over with continual Care? Miſcarriages, after all, will happen in ſuch Numbers of ſuch an Age. But the general good Order that reigns here, to moſt Foreigners, not the worſt Judges in this Caſe, appears incredible when related, and very ſurpriſing when ſeen. It remains only to wiſh, what there never was more Hope of; that, as our Universities have long excelled all others, they may continually improve upon themſelves.

But ſtill, Parents muſt not expect their Childrens Improvement ſhould be great, unleſs they contribute their own Share to it. If Indolence and Luxury be taught them by bad Example, or Prejudice againſt every thing ſerious and praiſe-worthy by bad Converſation, before they come hither; if they come with little or no Charge given about Regularity and Application, but Licence be claimed for them in Proportion to their Quality; or if, after the mere Form of a ſhort Confinement here, they are let immediately looſe, to wear off by Negligence and Profligateness the

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few slight good Impressions that could be made; what room hath the Parent to hope for Improvement, or complain if none be found?

But let him be careful in his own Duty first; then the Persons, to whom he commits his Child afterwards, will undertake with some Comfort an Office, laborious and important at all Times; but particularly so in an Age of uncommon Corruption: when the Expectations of good Men are more than ever fixed on their discharging this Trust well; and their Failure will give bad ones the double Joy, of seeing Wickedness flourish, and accusing Them for it. Complaints indeed of unjust Accusations were never better grounded: but Complaints alone will do little Good; and even deserved Returns of Bitterness may do much Harm. The only Remedy is, that *by well doing we put to Silence** the Unreasonableness of ill Persons, and secure the Protection of those who mean well.

The Educator of Youth therefore will first perfect himself in each needful Qualification, and then apply to forming others. In every Science he will join the Discoveries of later Times with such Instruction, as may render the Learning of former Ages intelligible; and prudently direct the more particular Attention of each Person to such Things, as may chiefly relate to their future Part in Life.

* 1 Pet. ii. 15.

The Foundations of Religion he will lay deep and strong : recommending the great Articles of it, not to the Passions of those under his Care, by Warmth and Vehemence ; but to their Reason and Faith, by just Explications and conclusive Arguments : neither loading Revelation with unauthorised Doctrines and needless Difficulties ; nor yielding up the least real Part of it, to defend the rest ; nor altering the least, to give it a more plausible Appearance. A disputing and cavilling Temper he will endeavour to repress ; but will treat with all Tenderness the Doubts of an ingenuous Mind ; and ever encourage that sacred Regard to Truth, which makes Men worthy of Esteem, even whilst they err, and is the great Security of their returning into the right Way. He will take fit Opportunity of shewing, how closely a due Regard to the Teachers of Religion and Virtue is connected with the Practice of both. But the Persons, whose Employment teaching them is to be, he will studiously warn, that the only way of securing this Regard is, by useful and exemplary Lives ; prudent and inoffensive Conduct ; and so hearty a Friendship to all just and reasonable Liberty, as may give them unsuspected Authority to oppose the dissolute Licentiousness, that in vain assumes its Name.

To Civil Government he will conscientiously teach that dutiful Obedience and Honour, which Christianity requires all Subjects to pay ;

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and which the happiest Subjects in the World ought to pay with the chearfullest Gratitude. He will discourage with all possible Care, the Rage of party Zeal ; which warm and unexperienced Minds too often mistake for publick Spirit. Admitted in this fair Disguise, it possesses the whole Man ; tinctures his Way of thinking on almost every Subject ; leads him to hate and injure worthy Persons, to admire and associate amongst very bad ones ; with whom this immoral Temper stands in the stead of all Merit, whilst indeed it hinders the acquiring of any. As Life goes on, these Evils increase : of which all the World complains, but unhappily indulges them at the same time ; instead of each curbing, on his own Side, the Eagerness and Keeness of so malevolent a Principle. Young Persons should therefore be reminded, that the Seats of Learning are purposely sequestered from the busy Scenes of Life ; that the Time for engaging in those will come but too soon : and mean while the generous Ardor of Youth should be exerted in making the Preparation of useful Knowledge and virtuous Habits ; but ever tempered with such Mildness and Diffidence concerning Matters, of which they need not judge yet, as they will every Day see more necessary in order to judge and act right.

This is indeed one Part of Morals : and on every other Part the Director of Education will have an attentive Eye. Even the Sallies of a
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well-meant Fervor he will prudently moderate, when they give Religion a gloomy Appearance, or add to it a needless Burden. But much more strictly will he guard against the opposite Extreme of Libertinism and Profaneness: labouring to keep up, not only an outward Form of Regularity, but a serious Awe of God, and Sense of Duty, in every Mind; watching over each Tendency to Vice; and considering wilful Neglect of Application, as a dangerous Kind of Guilt. In order to this great End of preserving Morals, he will preserve and countenance, as far as it remains possible, that Temperance of living, Simplicity of Appearance, and Frugality of Expence, which are usually brought hither, and so peculiarly suit this Institution; which keep the Mind in fit Temper for the Exercise of its Faculties, and defend it from the Corruptions of Luxury and Vanity; lay the Foundations of Health and Prudence in Men for the rest of their Days, and prepare them to be virtuous and easy in whatever Stations may prove their Share.

It remains only now, that the Person, of whom all this Care is taken, should know and improve his own Happiness. Too many there are, that set out upon the important Journey of Life, without a skilful, or perhaps a friendly Hand, to conduct them through the Difficulties of the untried and hazardous Way. These are greatly excusable in their Faults,

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and pitiable in their Miſeries. But of you God and Man will expect Attainments, that may bear Proportion to the Advantages, with which you are bleſſed. Nature engages your Parents ; Duty, Honour, and Intereſt, your Inſtructors, to conſult your Welfare : which they deſire as much as yourſelves, and underſtand better. Reſtrain therefore and apply yourſelves as they direct ; though you not only feel it painful, but ſee it not yet beneficial : and truſt thoſe, who have all imaginable Claim to be truſted, that, by quick Degrees, the Pain will wear off, and the Benefit be evident.

Their Province, who are devoted to the Service of Religion, will be to appear, perhaps after a very ſhort Preparation, in an Age ſtrongly prejudiced againſt them and their Function : ſure Objects, without Merit, of Contempt and Hatred ; but, with it, capable ſtill of being eſteemed and uſeful. This Situation, you ſee, requires in the firſt Place, that you carefully acquaint yourſelves with the Proofs, the Doctrines and Precepts of the Goſpel Revelation. Fear not therefore making free Inquiry into every Thing. Others inquire with bad Intention : if you do it not with good, you will want true Learning, to oppoſe againſt the falſe and half-Learning of Unbelievers. Only begin not your Inquiry, till you are qualified : and end it not, till you have conſidered Matters thoroughly. Young Minds, and often the moſt generous of them, are apt
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to pursue Truth with an Impatience, that occasions their missing it. Nothing ought ever to stand against full Evidence, well weighed: but many Things may induce those, who have yet had little Time for Thought, to think again, and be diffident in the mean while. For not only the World too commonly imputes to a Man, all his Life, the indigested Notions of his early Years; but Persons list themselves by positive Talk, and then cannot retreat. With this Caution, and with due Method, Diligence will go far in acquiring Knowledge. But Knowledge is only one Part of what must be attended to. The unguarded Conduct, even of Persons younger Days, will be treasured up in many a malicious Memory to their future Disadvantage: and, though an Affectation of untimely Gravity fits ill, yet Innocence and Piety are the Duties of every Age. They especially, whose Profession will make a stricter Abstinence from doubtful and imprudent Pleasures expected of them hereafter, will find it much the safest and easiest to begin now; and, by an uniform Life, grow regularly up into that Esteem, which their Destination will require.

And though neither the same Diligence of Application, nor such Accuracy of Conduct, may appear necessary in those of higher Rank; yet an improved Understanding must be an Advantage, and the Want of it a Blemish, proportionably conspicuous, as the Station, in

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which either appears, is publick : and the Choice, how Life ſhall be ſpent, is always important in the ſame Degree, as the Perſons are who make it. Such therefore, of all others, ſhould not take it haſtily for granted, that an immoral Courſe is right. To begin with Virtue, at leaſt till fair Inquiry rejects it, is evidently the ſafe Part. No one ever bitterly condemned himſelf, that he had ſpent his younger Years ſoberly : many have, that they did not. Then, ſome Degrees of Vice are owned to produce Miſery : and every Vice leads on to worſe Degrees of itſelf, and Variety of others. Or, though a vicious Perſon could depend on ſuffering no preſent Harm ; yet he cannot fail of doing a great deal : and a Man would not chooſe, that the chief Traces, which he leaves behind him, to mark out his Paſſage through Life, ſhould be ſo many Injuries done his Fellow-creatures. At leaſt no one would venture upon this, till he were ſure there is no ſuperior Inſpector of his Conduct. Now there cannot be Certainty againſt Religion : and there are ſuch Evidences for it, as muſt require more than a few flight Cavils, or bold Jeſts, to overturn them. A careful Examination then it juſtly demands. And if upon ſuch Examination it prove true, as undoubtedly it will ; remember it is a moſt ſerious Truth, in which the foremoſt of Mankind is equally concerned with the meaneſt. Therefore in a Caſe of ſuch Moment, let no falſe Shame, nor favourite Paſſion prevail over you ; but *give your*

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*Hearts early to the Lord that made you **. Lay the Foundation of your Lives here, on the firm Ground of Chriſtian Faith; and build upon it whatever is juſt and good, worthy and noble, till the Structure be complete in moral Beauty. The World, into which you are entering, lies in wait with Variety of Temptations. Unfavourable Sentiments of Religion will ſoon be ſuggeſted to you; and all the Snares of Luxury, falſe Honour, and Intereſt, ſpread in your Way; which with moſt of your Rank are too ſucceſſful, and to many fatal. Happy the few, that in any Part of Life become ſenſible of their Errors; and, with painful Reſolution, tread back the wrong Steps, which they have taken! But happieſt of Men is he, who, by an even Courſe of right Conduct, from the firſt, as far as human Frailty permits, hath at once avoided the Miſeries of Sin, the Sorrows of Repentance, and the Difficulties of Virtue; who not only can think of his preſent State with Compoſure, but reflect on his paſt Behaviour with thankful Approbation, and look forwards with unmixed Joy to that important future Hour, when he ſhall appear before God, and humbly offer to him a whole Life ſpent in his Service!

* Ecclus xxxix. 5.

S E R M O N II.

Preached in the Parish Church of St.
James, Westminster, January 30,
1733-4.

I S A. xxvi. 9.

—*When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the
Inhabitants of the World will learn Righte-
ousness.*

THE gracious and wise Creator of this
Universe continually *upholds it by the
Word of his Power**: and governs each Part
of it suitably to its Nature. The Motions of
the inanimate World proceed intirely from
him. The Actions of intelligent Beings are
indeed their own. But, as God foresees from
Eternity what every Agent, in every possible
Situation, will do or intend; he must be able
to influence, direct, and temper their Con-
duct, by many Ways that are conceivable, and
doubtless by many more; so as not only to
assist and protect Persons in *doing what is law-
ful and right*†; but also to make even the
worst of Wretches, in the worst of their
Crimes, undesigning Instruments of his righte-
ous Purposes. And it being evidently as wor-

* Heb. i. 3.

† Ezek. xviii. 27.

thy of him, as it is easy for him, to act thus; the Reason of Mankind hath ever disposed them to believe, what Revelation hath fully confirmed, that a *never failing Providence ordereth all Things, both in Heaven and Earth* *. Whatever befalls us therefore, prosperous or adverse, being what our Maker judges and determines to be, on one Account or another, fit and proper; Events of both Sorts may justly be called *his Judgments*. But as, through the Wickedness of the World, he hath much oftener Occasion to decree Punishments, than Rewards: this Name generally denotes the severer Exercises of his Power; the Sufferings, that he inflicts on Men; or, in other Words, that they bring upon themselves. For the strong Connexion, which we experience, of our Follies and Sins with Distress and Misery, is one Thing, that proceeds from the just Judgment of God; from that Order and Course of Things, which he hath established.

Amidst the vast Variety of providential Dispensations, some are, to human Faculties, unfathomable Depths. We can only see in them the awful Exertion of his Authority, who is Lord of all; and learn the important Lesson, of humbling ourselves before him, and submitting meekly to his Will; in firm Expectation, that whatever may look disorderly and wrong at present, will prove in due Time to be wisest and best. Other Things there are,

* Collect for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

capable of affording further Instruction : concerning which, however, it is easy for partiality, or Inattention, to make dangerous Mistakes. For the same Events being often permitted to befall very different Persons, for as different Ends ; whoever will *judge according to the first Appearance*, will be far from *judging righteous Judgment* *.

But still Multitudes of Occurrences remain, which convey such obvious and clear Informations and Warnings, that Providence must intend we should apply them to our own Benefit. For God doth not punish merely for the Sake of Punishment. Even his Severities are the Effects of Goodness : and always directed to the Advantage, either of those who feel them, or at least of others ; *that they may hear and fear, and do no more Wickedness* †. Looking back on the Transactions of past Ages, without a moral Intention in doing it, is only gratifying an useless Curiosity ; or acquiring Knowledge, full as likely to be ill used, as well. But it is a most serious and profitable Employment, humbly to trace the Footsteps of infinite Wisdom, in the Government, as well as Creation, of the World ; and think over the various Scenes, and wonderful Vicissitudes, of mortal Affairs ; in order to learn a true Sense of our Condition here, and right Notions of behaving in it. *All Things*, that have ever happened to Men,

* John vii. 24. † Deut. xiii. 11.

have happened to them for *Ensamples*: and they are written for our *Admonition*, upon whom the *Ends of the World* are come *. And surely an awful *Admonition* it is, to have, as it were, the *History* of our *Species* lying open before us; and the whole *Experience* of *Man*, since *Man* hath been, teaching and testifying to us, what a dreadful *Train* of *Evils*, personal, domestick, and national, every *Transgression* of the *Laws* of *Life* is capable of drawing after it. Now as some of these *Facts* gradually sink down into the *Abyss* of *Time*, and disappear; the *Wickedness* of every *Generation* is raising up others in their room; which, by the *Advantage* of their *Nearness*, we may observe more distinctly; and receive deeper *Impressions* from them, because of the closer *Relation*, which they bear to us.

Amongst these, the dreadful *Deed* of this *Day*, and the *Calamities* which preceded and followed it, set before our *Eyes* a most peculiarly instructive *Example* of divine *Judgments*, brought down by a sinful *People* on their own *Heads*: concerning which, we may justly say, in the *Words* of the *Prophet Daniel*: that *under the whole Heaven* hath not been done, as hath been done upon *Jerusalem* †. To go through the *Detail* of so lasting and complicated a *Misery*, is no more possible, than it would be proper, in a *Discourse* of this kind: the *Business* of which is, neither to dispute

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

† Dan. ix. 12.

upon the doubtful Parts of the History, nor to amuse the Hearer with the Particulars of what is most undoubted: but to build religious and moral Conclusions on those general Facts, which every one must admit, and will easily recollect, on this mournful Subject. We all know, the Tragedy began with the too just Occasion, unhappily given on each Side, for Complaints and Fears. It proceeded, on the Side of the Disaffected, to the unjustifiable Remedies, first of Sedition, then of open Rebellion; doubly unjustifiable, as the Grievances alledged were already redressed: and it concluded, after the many Distresses of a Civil War undergone for several Years, in the Murder of the King, and the total Ruin of the Constitution: to which, after trying in vain every way to save it, and making such Concessions for that End, as the better and greater Part even of his Adversaries voted to be sufficient, he died at last a willing and a patient Martyr.

These are the principal Points, from which we are now to draw proper Uses. Passion and Prejudice may easily suggest very improper ones: and this Day become by such Applications of Things as contending Parties are too apt to make, an Instrument of perpetuating those Animosities, against which it ought to caution us for ever. To censure with Bitterness the Persons or the Proceedings on either Side now, when all that were concerned on both, are
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gone long since to answer for their Sins before God, is neither useful nor decent. And to ascribe at random the same Dispositions to any of the present Generation, is both uncharitable towards Them, and prejudicial to the Publick. What lies before us on the Occasion, is only, from the Errors of our Ancestors, to instruct and direct ourselves. And we shall never see clearly, either what those Errors were, or how we are to guard against them, unless we consider things with a mild, as well as serious, Temper of Mind. This will teach us, even where we differ, as Men must be allowed to differ, in judging what the Conduct of others was formerly, and how far it was right or wrong, to agree however in our Determination of the essential Question, what our own Conduct ought to be now. Thus we shall be sure to avoid all hurtful Conclusions, and take the right way to make a Variety of useful ones. For doubtless every Rank of Men amongst us, both in Church and State, from the highest to the lowest, may *learn* most important Lessons of *Righteousness*, from those Failures of their Predecessors, and those ensuing Miseries, which we lament this Day. There was no one Party, or Order of Men, but did wrong: nor almost any one Thing, in which they sinned, but they suffered a like Return for it. And it should be our Business at present, whatever our Station is, Ecclesiastical or Civil, not only to recollect the Faults in others, of which those, who went before us, complained;

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but chiefly those, into which they fell themselves. For thus each Part of the Society, instead of such mutual Imputations, as tend to make the whole uneasy, would be led to such a home Amendment, as tends to make it happy. But leaving, and recommending, to every Sort of Persons, the Care of drawing Inferences, rightly suited to their own Cases in particular; I shall only enlarge on the general Directions, which so dreadful a Time of Sin, and Suffering, may give to us all in common.

Now the great comprehensive Lesson, which God intends to teach by every Judgment, is an awful Regard to himself, as the moral Governor of the World; and a faithful Practice of true Religion. But here some will instantly object: were not the Mischiefs of those Days chiefly owing to Religion: many of the Disputes merely of a religious Nature; and all of them embittered beyond Measure by a Mixture of religious Animosities? How then is it recommended to us from hence? A little patient Attention will shew you. Real Religion, the Love of God our common Father, the love of Him whose peculiar Precept is *to love one another**, can never produce Hatred and Contention upon Earth. It is the strongest Bond, that can be, of Union and Peace; the strictest Restraint of every injurious Passion; the most powerful Incitement to every benevolent and merciful Deed. It is the only

* John xiii. 34. xv. 12, 17.

Foundation of Trust and Security, amidst all that can happen around us ; and of Tranquillity and Joy within us. But Hypocrisy, Superstition, and Enthusiasm, though extremely different from Religion, are often mistaken for it : and these may work very fatal Effects under its Name : especially when Pretences of extraordinary Piety and Purity, on one Side, are made peculiarly plausible and popular, by the Prevalence of Immorality and Profaneness on the other ; which Enormities, though far from universal, were too common, amongst the Friends of the Royal Cause, notwithstanding the excellent Example of the King ; whom even his Enemies owned to be sincerely pious, and strictly virtuous. But then, if Religion may be counterfeited or perverted to bad Purposes ; so may every good Thing in the World ; Honour, Friendship, Loyalty, publick Spirit, Liberty itself. And Things of an indifferent Nature, and little Use, if often misapplied, it is just and prudent to abolish. But Attempts against the Principles, that keep Society from Dissolution, as far as they can be effectual, must be pernicious. And amongst these Principles, God hath taken especial Care, that the first and great Law of our Being, the Reverence due to himself, shall never be extirpated out of the World : and that every Effort to weaken it, shall be close followed by Consequences of private and publick Misery ; which will severely prove, as indeed they have begun to do amongst Us, that whatever Men, *wise in*

their own Conceit *, may think, *the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil, is Understanding* †.

The Thing then to be endeavoured is, not to lessen, but increase the Regard to true Religion: only distinguishing it carefully from whatever else puts on its Name. Want of this Care produced great Errors and Evils, in the Days of which I am speaking. There was, it must be owned, in the Friends and Governors of the Church, an over warm Zeal, and very blameable Stiffness and Severity. But there was also, in the Enemies of the Church, a most provoking Bitterness and Perverseness: with a wild Eagerness for Innovations, founded on ignorant Prejudices, which their heated Fancies raised into necessary Truths: and then, looking on them as the Cause of Christ, they thought themselves bound and commissioned to overturn whatever was contrary to them. The Enthusiasm of that Belief gave them a Spirit and a Vehemence in all they undertook; which common Men, acting on common Motives, could hardly be expected to withstand. Their Success, in its Turn, inflamed their Imaginations of being directed and assisted from above: and they thought themselves authorised by this higher Dispensation, to tread under Foot, without Scruple, the ordinary Rules of Right and Justice.

* Rom. xi. 25. xii. 16. † Job xxviii. 28.

Let us always then beware of all such Mistakes, as then prevailed on either Side. Let us never be vehement either for or against Matters of Indifference : about Matters of Importance, let us be earnest with Mildness : and neither desire to see Authority exercised in Religion, to the Oppression of any ones Conscience ; nor yet to see Liberty introduce Confusion. Let us coolly consider, of which Extreme we are most in Danger, and oppose that ; whatever Shape or Name it assumes. The Name is but a Circumstance : the Thing to be dreaded is, the Principle, or the Practice, of advancing favourite Notions and Schemes, by Force or Fraud. The puritan Zealots were shockingly guilty of that Crime. The Church of *Rome* is, if possible, still more so : probably not a little concerned in bringing on us the Evils of this Day : certainly a determined Enemy, ever to be had in View, feared and guarded against. But then the effectual Method of guarding against Falsehood is not, by opposing to it a contrary Falsehood, as bad or worse ; and setting up Licentiousness to encounter Bigotry. This, instead of curing, is multiplying Evils ; which, opposite as they seem, will thrive together, and each assist the other's Growth. Nothing can secure us from false Religion, but true : nothing give Happiness, private or publick, but that serious Regard to God, which will place us under his fatherly Protection ; and such rational Notions of the Doctrines and Precepts of his

holy Word, as will direct us into the Practice of all those Duties, which we owe to each other.

The second Lesson of Righteousness, which the Judgments of Heaven on our Forefathers plainly teach us, is paying due Obedience to legal Authority; and religiously abstaining from the smallest Instances of Disrespect to it; since we find, they have insensibly carried, even well-meaning and wise Men, into the utmost Lengths of wrong and imprudent Behaviour. All the Disorders, of which this Day reminds us, began with the lower Marks of Disaffection: immoderate Complaints, indecent Reflexions, ill-natured Interpretations, groundless Suspicions; first thoughtlessly, then designedly, spread abroad; till by degrees they took such Root, that nothing was too bad to be believed, nothing good enough to be approved. Discontent and Clamour soon ripened into Sedition and Tumult: after which, open Rebellion and general Confusion followed of course. Still it is by no means unlawful, either to represent Grievances, or to oppose ill Measures. On the contrary, doing these Things preserves a Government; neglecting them leads to its Ruin: and had the Means of doing them been freely and early allowed, and honestly used, in the Times we are now considering; probably none of the Mischiefs, that followed, had ever been known. But then, Representations must always be true, decent, needful, seasonable.

seasonable. And Opposition should never be made, but after impartial Consideration, with evident Necessity, by peaceful and regular Methods, by prudent and cautious Steps; with proper Submission to all that are set over us; and with the most sacred Regard to the Sovereign Power: for if that be shaken, Experience hath shewn us, all is in Danger. Let us therefore only remember, that whatever was wicked and pernicious formerly, is of the same Nature still: and it will prove an excellent Direction to our Conduct. From hence Persons in lower Stations will learn, not to disquiet themselves and their Neighbours, to ill Purpose, with injudicious Vehemence concerning Things out of their Sphere; but leave those to conduct them, whose Business it is; thinking charitably of them, and praying heartily for them. Those of higher Degree will be induced, to proceed, in what lies before them, with Temper and Considerateness, with Equity and Candor; with Care, neither to provoke Resentment, nor excite Jealousy. And we shall all, of every Rank, be instructed, to acknowledge thankfully the many Blessings that we enjoy, beyond what our miserable Ancestors did a Century ago: and not only to bear with Chearfulness the necessary, though heavy, Burthens, that have been laid on us, for the Safety of all, which can justly be dear to us; but submit with Patience to whatever, we may any of us apprehend, we suffer more than we need: seriously reflecting,

what fatal Effects may arise from a different Spirit. For in the Times before us, when there were confessedly many Grievances, and some of them great ones; yet how inconsiderable were they, when compared with the Bloodshed and Devastation, the Oppression and Confusion, the total Destruction of Church and State, which unwise and undutiful Attempts for Redress at length produced! Let not Us therefore *murmur, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer* *.

A third Lesson, which this Day affords us, is, not to be fond of Innovations, either in Civil Matters, or Ecclesiastical. It is a common Weakness of Mankind, to overlook the Advantages of their Condition, and dwell only on its Inconveniencies and Defects, real or imagined; till, though a very tolerable, or perhaps, on the whole, a very good one; it appears to them worse, than any other, into which they can fall. Even the more indolent therefore, instead of discountenancing, look favourably on Proposals for Change. And the more enterprizing rush on with Eagerness to unhinge and overset; never once reflecting, whether the Project be not either impossible to be accomplished, or not worth the Pains; injurious to others, or likely to prove pernicious to themselves: never seriously considering, what they have to substi-

* 1 Cor. x. 10.

tute ; whether it can take place, and last ; whether it will be, on the whole, for the better or the worse. Thus were too many of our Predecessors in this Nation disposed : extremely miserable under a Constitution of Government, which they found too late inseparable from their Happiness : and so earnest to reform every Part of it, that they ruined the Whole. The Projects for establishing perfect Liberty in the State, ended, as too much Liberty always will, in absolute Tyranny : successive Tyrannies, of various Shapes, and Names unheard of, dispossessing each other ; harassing the Nation with continual Uncertainties and Alarms ; exhausting it with daily Executions and Impositions. The Schemes for restoring an imaginary Purity in the Church, unexpectedly ran to such Lengths, as destroyed the whole Frame of it, and involved the Crown in its Fall. No other Form of Religion could be set up, instead of that which was abolished. Mens Minds were held in continual Agitation, by the wild Zeal of contending Sects : teaching Doctrines ; some, blasphemous against God ; some, subversive of all Order amongst Men ; some, contrary to all Care of Virtue and good Life : and every Thing was tolerated, but what had a Right to be established. How these Things would have ended : whether in a total Contempt of Religion, and moral Obligations too ; or whether, after that was found insupportable, as it soon must, the *Romish* Superstition, ever vigilant
and

and active, would have overspread the Nation, wearied out with Divisions, and glad to embrace any Thing, that promised Unity; this God hath mercifully hid from our Knowledge, by blessing us, in the Extremity of such Misery, with its only Cure, the Restoration of our ancient Constitution. Let us esteem it then as we ought, and be zealous to preserve it: improve it, if we can really and safely: but not be forward to practise upon it without Necessity, or some very valuable End. Hoping for Perfection in any thing human, is visionary; murmuring for want of it is resolving never to be happy; and taking irregular Methods to obtain it, is the sure way to be wretched. Some Alterations indeed, from Time to Time, the Reason of Things and the Changes of Circumstances may require. But that no wanton or doubtful, much less dangerous Trials, ought to be made, the fatal Experience of this Day fully shews.

And a fourth Direction, which it gives as plainly, is, to beware of the Spirit of Party. Nothing, but that, could have blinded and embittered People so, as to make them destroy themselves and the Publick, without seeing or feeling it. Few, if any, at first, had the least Intention of what they afterwards did: very probably, had it been foretold them, they would have abhorred the Thought. But Persons cannot even guess, when they give themselves up to this Kind of Zeal, how strong
it

it may grow within them; or how they may be entangled, and carried on, against their Wills. *The Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water*: nobody can say, how far it may overflow, or how hard it may be to get it back into its Channel, and repair the Breach. *Therefore leave off Contention, before it be meddled with* *, and by mutual Provocation worked up into a Rage. When Party Resentments and Contests run high, the general Good is no longer in View: both Sides attend wholly to the Advancement of their own Power; depressing their Adversaries; forcing them into Measures, hurtful to the Publick; the worse, the better; and no way is left untried to ruin one another, till the Ruin of the whole is too probable a Consequence. But above all, in Countries blest with Freedom, amidst numberless Advantages, there is one peculiar Danger; that the high Spirit which it gives Men, and the full Opportunities which they have to exert that Spirit, may produce Diffensions utterly destructive, not only of Peace and Comfort, but, in the End, of Freedom itself. Let us therefore always remember St. Paul's Caution, *If ye bite and devour one another, take Heed that ye be not consumed one of another* †; and behave suitably to St. Peter's Rule, *as free, yet not using our Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness, but as the Servants of God* ‡.

* Prov. xvii. 14. † Gal. v. 15. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 16.

These then are the Instructions, which the dreadful Judgment, this Day commemorated, affords us: to *fear God, honour the King, and not meddle with them that are given to change**; but *lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty*†. The Transgression of these Duties, was, by the natural Consequences of Things, and the just Permission of Heaven, the Cause, on the Peoples Part, of those terrible Calamities, under which our Ancestors groaned so long; and were made to *learn Righteousness*, not as we, by the Experience of others, but by heavy Sufferings of their own. To these, however, God in his good Time graciously put an End: and re-establishing our ancient Form of Government, hath, by a wonderful Succession of kind Providences, preserved it, through innumerable Dangers, from abroad and at home, to this Day. Nor perhaps, with all the Faults of the present Age, which God knows are neither few nor small ones, would it be easy for us to fix on almost any other Time or Country, in which we could, with Reason, rather have made it our Choice to live. Let us therefore join Gratitude for his Mercies with Fear of his Judgments; and be moved by both, to Piety and Virtue, publick and private. He hath given us great and frequent Proofs of his Readiness to save and protect us; together with some few, most deserved Instances, of Displeasure and Punishment: thus

* Prov. xxiv. 21.

† 1 Tim. ii. 2.

A Sermon preached on Jan. 30. 45

placing before our Eyes, and leaving to our Choice, the Happiness of a religious, loyal and moral People, or the Miseries of a profane, rebellious, and wicked one. *Now therefore, to conclude in the Words of the Prophet Samuel, If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his Voice; then shall both ye, and the King that reigneth over you, continue, following the Lord your God. But if ye will not obey the Voice of the Lord, but rebel against his Commandment; then shall the Hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your Fathers*.*

* 1 Sam. xii. 13, 14, 15.

S E R M O N I I I .

Preached in the Parish Church of St,
James, Westminster, November 27,
1737, being the *Sunday* after the
Death of her Majesty the late Queen
Caroline.

ECCLES. vii. 4.

*The Heart of the Wise is in the House of
Mourning.*

THE Providence of God is one great Instrument, which he uses for our Instruction : and every Dispensation of it is fitted to convey very useful Admonitions to Persons of attentive Minds. But the mournful Events of Things have a peculiar Force to excite Recollection and serious Thought : to place our Condition here, in a just and strong Light before our Eyes ; to awaken Sentiments within us, of Piety and Resignation, Humanity and Compassion ; and prompt us to make these the Rule of our Conduct. So long as nothing alarms us, we grow too commonly negligent and inconsiderate ; forget our Dangers, forget our Mercies ; give up our Hearts to every Passion that seizes on them ; and thus are of-
ten

ten led to do great Harm, both to others and ourselves. But *when the Judgments of God are in the Earth, then the Inhabitants of the World learn Righteousness* *. When the Voice of the Lord crieth unto the City, Hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it † : then the Ears of them, that hear, shall hearken ; the Heart also of the Rash shall understand Knowledge ‡ . But of all the Strokes of God's Hand, that which carries the greatest Awe with it, is Death ; *the Sentence of the Lord over all Flesh* || . The Sight or the Thought of that important Change, from the Constitution of our Nature, makes very strong Impressions upon us : and the longer we revolve the Subject in our Minds, the more Reason we find to be deeply affected by it, and act with a continual View to it. Nothing therefore would influence us more effectually to *apply our Hearts unto Wisdom* § ; if it were not for this one Circumstance, that being surrounded with daily Instances of Mortality, they are familiarized to us in such a Manner by their Frequency, that though in Reason they ought to have the greater Effect upon us for their Number, yet in Fact they have usually little or none ; unless there be something, either in their Nearness to us, or their publick Importance, to distinguish them from common Cases, and engage a more interesting Attention to them. We should therefore be very careful

* Isa. xxvi. 9.
|| Eccles. xli. 3.

† Mic. vi. 9.
§ Ps. xc. 12.

‡ Isa. xxxii. 3, 4.

never to miss the Opportunity of improving ourselves within, by due Reflexions on such Deaths, as our own particular Concern in them, or the general one, makes considerable : but, how great soever our Loss be otherwise, resolve to gain this Advantage notwithstanding, that *by the Sadness of the Countenance our Heart shall become better* *.

For so valuable a Purpose, it is well worth while to bear with all the Gloominess of *the House of Mourning* ; to place ourselves voluntarily in it, a while, and return thither from Time to Time ; deliver ourselves up to such Meditations, as we find it fitted to inspire ; and dwell upon them somewhat longer, than the first unavoidable Impressions oblige us. For most useful Lessons will *the Heart of the Wise* be able to learn there ; and excellent Rules of Conduct, with respect to himself, to the Memory of those who are deceased, and to such as they have left behind them.

I. With respect to himself. *Death is the End of all Men, and the Living will lay it to his Heart* †. It is because we do not *lay it to our Hearts*, that we most of us go on just as if we imagined there was to be no End at all : and though we do not indeed speculatively think so, yet we live and act upon that Supposition : and our knowing it to be a false one hath no Manner of Influence, for want of re-

* Eccclus vii. 3.

† Eccles. vii. 2.

flecting

fleetings upon it as such. Hence we indulge
 our Souls in vehement Desires, and fill our
 Days with endless Projects: every Point gain-
 ed, opening an Inlet for more to be aimed at;
 every Failure, redoubling our Earnestness to
 recover our lost Ground: and we never recol-
 lect, how Life is wasting under us all the
 while. Even to the Departure of others be-
 fore our Eyes we attend, only as an Oppor-
 tunity of framing and following new Schemes:
 and thus the Death of our Fellow-creatures
 proves an Occasion of our forgetting the more
 entirely, that we shall ever die ourselves.
 This could not be, would we but stop a lit-
 tle at *the House of Mourning*; and make the
 most obvious of all Reflexions there, from
 contemplating the End of others, how very
 quickly our own End may come, and how
 soon it must. Such Thoughts will enliven
 our Diligence in performing our Duty here:
 in *working, while it is Day, the Works of*
*him, that sent us**. For how suddenly so-
 ever the Night may overtake us thus employ-
 ed; *blessed is that Servant whom his Lord,*
when he comes, shall find so doing†. But the
 same Sort of Meditations must surely mode-
 rate, beyond all Things, our Warmth in every
 other Pursuit: and dispose us, instead of
 plunging inconsiderately forwards, till in the
 Midst of our Bustle we drop unexpectedly
 into the Grave; rather to secure the present
 Time, for recollecting, before we go out of

* John ix. 4.

† Matth. xxiv. 46.

the World, what our Behaviour hath been hitherto in it: that so we may endeavour to correct our Mistakes, supply our Omissions, perfect our Faith and Repentance; and through God's Grace, which alone can enable us, form ourselves into such a Temper of Mind, *that we may be found of Him in Peace, without Spot and blameless* *.

And as the Thoughts of Death are excellently fitted to compose the Vehemence of our other Passions, so they are fitted particularly to check that very sinful Kind of Vehemence, which we are exceedingly prone to express, one against another. Whoever will but consider of how short a Duration our Existence here is, and with how great a Number of unavoidable Sufferings it is filled, will be thoroughly convinced, that there is no manner of Need for us to load the *few and evil Days* † of our Fellow-creatures with additional Uneasinesses, but great Occasion to give one another all the Comfort we can; and live as friendly as possible, whilst we stay together, with those from whom we are to part so soon, and appear before the Father of all; who will treat us, as we have treated our Brethren.

Another Instruction, which *the Heart of the Wise* will learn *in the House of Mourning*, is, never to flatter himself with Expectations of any lasting Good in a State so uncertain as

* 2 Pet. iii. 14. † Gen. xlvii. 9.

this. For let the Prospect appear as fair as it will; yet besides a Multitude of other Things to destroy it, every single Instance of Death reminds us, that our own Lives may fail; that their Lives, in whom our Happiness is placed, or on whom our Hopes depend, may fail: and even those, who seem to stand at a great Distance from us, may overturn, by their Fall, the whole Edifice, which our forward Imagination had erected. Undoubtedly the Dreams, which Men indulge, of enjoying more in the World than it hath to bestow on them, are mighty pleasing ones for a while. But from the first they do us Harm: they give us a different Turn of Mind, from what our Maker intended we should have: and when a Disappointment comes; then lasting Wretchedness immediately succeeds our short-lived Felicity. For, whether we continue in a State of Dejection; or whether we repeat the same Folly; expect again, and are again deceived; either way we are miserable. Or could we escape with ever so little Uneasiness, or enjoy in this Manner ever so much Pleasure here; yet setting our Hearts on that, as our Portion, and seeking our Happiness where God hath not placed it, can never end well for us. And therefore we should contemplate with Care every Dispensation of Providence, that may warn us against so fatal a Mistake; and hearken diligently to that Voice, with which God hath appointed that every Thing on Earth shall cry aloud to us: *Arise ye, and*

depart: for this is not your Rest *. So far from it indeed, so absolutely incapable is the present World of giving us any Security for any one Enjoyment: that the highest and the lowest Persons in it are quite upon a Level in this Respect; equally unable to promise the least Thing with Certainty, either to themselves or to others. Whatever is human, is alike precarious; and our only sure Dependence is on the Power that made us. *Put not your Trust in Princes, nor in any Child of Man: for there is no Help in them. Their Breath goeth forth; they return to their Earth: in that very Day their Thoughts perish. Blessed is he, that hath the God of Jacob for his Help; whose Hope is in the Lord his God: which made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that is therein; which keepeth Truth for ever* †. A World, like this, cannot be the Seat of Happiness. Yet our gracious Creator and Father certainly designed us to be happy. And therefore, the less Provision he hath made for it here, the surer we may be, that a better State remains in reserve. It is true, indeed, we are all Sinners: and from our own Deserts could have little Ground of Comfort in looking beyond the Grave. But we have it abundantly from the Assurance of Forgiveness, on most equitable Terms, in Jesus Christ; *who hath brought Life and Immortality to Light* ‡, and *delivered them who through Fear of Death*

* Mic. ii. 10.

† Ps. cxvi. 3—6.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 10.

were

were all their Life-time subject to Bondage *. Here then it is, that the Uncertainty of Life, and every Thing in it, directs us to fix : on the firm Foundation of Faith in the Gospel of our blessed Redeemer. Secured, by Him, of future Bliss, in proportion to the present Afflictions, which we bear as we ought, we shall pass through them all, not only with composed, but chearful Resignation : the more steadfastly we look on the dark Side of Objects, the clearer Light will arise to us out of them ; and the truest Consolation from *the House of Mourning*.

You see therefore, what Improvement *the Heart of the Wise* may receive from a general Consideration of *the End of all Men*. But the further View, of the different Ends of different Men, is a Subject of yet further Advantage. *The Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness : but the Righteous hath Hope in his Death* †. The former of these Reflexions is indeed a very dreadful, but a very instructive one. For whether we set before our Eyes the dying Terrors of an ill Person, whose Conscience is awakened too late ; or the fatal Insensibility of one *hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin* ‡, and going to *lie down in Sorrow* ||, without the least Apprehension of it : no Admonition can be either stronger or more important, than that which both these Cases

* Heb. ii. 15. † Prov. xiv. 32. ‡ Heb. iii. 13.
|| Isa. l. 11.

naturally convey. But the Death of the Righteous gives Instruction unattended with Horror : and the Seriousness, which it inspires, is pleasing and peaceful. In one Way indeed of considering Things, the Departure of good and virtuous Persons from amongst Men is Matter of most melancholy Reflexion. Their Number is very small : and their Use is very great. *They are the Salt of the Earth**, that preserve Society from utter Corruption and Dissolution. And though the Generality of the World hath little Regard to this ; and is much more apt to depreciate the Merit of such, than to think of the Good they do, or the Evils they prevent ; yet the Example and Influence of but a few of them, distributed amongst the rest of Mankind, is a Thing of much Benefit : and when any of them are qualified with eminent Abilities, and placed by Providence in Stations of Importance ; there are Times, when their Life may be a Blessing of incredible Extent ; and their Death prove the Means of opening a Breach, for unknown Mischiefs to rush in. *Help, Lord : for the godly Man ceaseth : for the Faithful fail from among the Children of Men†. The Righteous perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart : and the Merciful are taken away ; none considering, that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come‡.* Such Reflexions, as these, it may perhaps appear Wisdom rather to drive from us, than invite them to disquiet us. But it is

* Matth. v. 13. † Ps. xii. 1. ‡ Isa. lvii. 1.

always wise to think of whatever it is possible to prevent: and a Reformation of national Sins is the plain Method to prevent the coming of national Calamities: as the Reformation of ourselves is, to prevent our being upon the whole the worse for them, if they should come. Whatever human Supports may at any Time fail, God will always support that People, who place a virtuous Trust in Him. Or though a Nation were growing, in Appearance, incorrigibly bad; yet they, who are careful to preserve themselves from the spreading Infection, particularly by prudent Meditations on the threatening Removal of valuable Persons, may possibly be thus excited to such Usefulness, as will defer, if not hinder, its Ruin: at least they take the Way to *deliver their own Souls* *, undoubtedly from the Punishments of another Life, and perhaps also, wholly or in part, from Sufferings in this. *The Days of Man are like a Shadow, that declineth: and he withereth like the Grass. But the Lord is the same: and his Years shall have no End. The Children of his Servants shall continue: and their Seed shall stand fast in his Sight* †.

Be the Loss therefore otherwise as great as it will, which befalls, at any Time, either the Publick in general, or ourselves in particular, when the Hand of God snatches away the Worthy and the Eminent; yet thinking

* Ezek. xiv. 14.

† Ps. cii. 11, 27, 28.

seriously and rightly upon it, we may certainly extract more than a little Good from it. And whoever is taught effectually, by such an Occurrence, to *cease from Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils* *, and place his Expectations and Hopes in the ever living God; far from being overwhelmed by the melancholy Part of the Event, will be able, with a very considerable Degree of Composedness to contemplate and improve by the enlivening and comforting Parts.

Amongst others, it surely is one very great Comfort, to see or to hear of that distinguishing Tranquillity, with which religious Persons meet their approaching Dissolution. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright: for the End of that Man is Peace* †. Sometimes indeed Fears and Doubts, arising from the Influence of a disordered Body, cloud the Mind of the Righteous at their Death, and obscure their setting Sun. Nor is it useless to take Notice even of these Cases, for our future Satisfaction, if ever the like should be our own, that our Covenant-Right to God's Favour may be very well grounded, notwithstanding for the present we are quite incapable of seeing and *rejoicing in the Light of his Countenance* ‡. But when the pious Soul enjoys in that Hour its genuine Serenity, then is the Beauty of Holiness beheld in the strongest Point of View. Then we have a noble Opportunity of discerning what Religion is, and what it can do; when we observe the Man-

* Isa. ii. 22.

† Ps. xxxvii. 37.

‡ Ps. lxxxix. 16.

ner, in which it enables those, who are supported by it, to possess themselves in the Face of Death. When we see them, in the Strength of it, joining the tenderest Affections to those whom they leave behind, with the quietest Submission to part with them; and the most virtuous Reasons for wishing to stay longer here, with the most dutiful Obedience to Him who calls them away: when we see them calmly divesting themselves of their dearest Attachments to Life; and only solicitous to provide, by serious Advice and kind Recommendations, for the Happiness of those who survive them: in the Midst of the acutest Pains *waiting* with the mildest Patience *all the Days of their appointed Time* *; and preserving a greater Sensibility of every ones Sufferings, than their own: shewing themselves now, what they always were; but rising in their Virtues proportionably to their Trial, and testifying that *their Faith is the Victory that overcometh the World* †; such Occasions, as God knows they had need bring some Advantage with them, furnish us with uncommon Means of learning in the Chambers of Death, what are the true Principles for the Conduct of Life. But,

II. The *Heart of the Wise*, whilst it dwells in the *House of Mourning*, will not only improve itself in a general Sense of Christian Piety, but also more especially, in such Pre-

* Job xiv. 14.

† 1 John v. 4.

cepts of it, as constitute a proper Behaviour with respect to the Memory of those, whose Departure is at any Time the Object of our Thoughts. The Dead indeed are out of our Reach : our Goodness extends not to them, and our Enmity can do them no Harm. But for the sake of common Justice and Humanity we are bound to the amiable Duties, of shewing Candor in Regard to their Failings ; and paying the Honour, which is due to their Merit.

That we should speak and think with Mildness, concerning such as partake of our own Nature ; and are in nothing more like us, than in the Frailties to which they may be liable ; this is what all Men, at all Times, have a Right to claim from us. But they who *have finished their Course* *, and *whose Dwelling is no longer with Flesh* † ; They seem to have a peculiar Exemption from those Severities of Censure, which amongst the Living are so much too liberally distributed and returned. Not that good and bad Characters are to be confounded after Death, any more than before it ; or *the Wicked to be as the Righteous* ‡ in that Respect, or any other. But yet, not even the Crimes of such, as have been worse Offenders than ordinary, should be related with Aggravation and Insult ; or indeed be mentioned at all, more than the In-

* Acts xx. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 7.
† Gen. xviii. 25.

† Dan. ii. 12.

terests of Virtue and Mankind require. Much less are we at Liberty to trample on the Ashes of Persons, on the whole religious and virtuous : or receive Accusations against them, of which very possibly a great Part may chiefly, or intirely, proceed from Invention or Mistake ; from Ignorance of Facts, or Inattention to Circumstances, or Weakness of Judgment. Nay indeed we ought not to dwell upon the Failings, with which we have the best Reason to apprehend they were chargeable, so as to give these for their Character : but cast a Veil over their Imperfections, in Reverence to their estimable Qualities. Towards the Living this is our Duty : but if we fail of it towards the Dead, nothing can excuse us. The Thought of that awful Change, which they have undergone, might alone be sufficient to calm every Emotion and Prejudice, that we may formerly have felt against them. But besides, all the Provocations, that we can have received from them, are now at an End. In whatever they have interfered with us ; they will do so no more. Whatever we have thought blameable in them ; the Cognizance, whether it be or not, is removed to a higher Tribunal. They are gone to answer for Their Deeds : we shall very shortly follow to answer for Ours ; let us judge one another with that Mercy, with which may our Lord and Master judge us all. And let us remember too, that in a worldly Way of considering Things, this is the discreet Method. *Rejoice not over thy greatest*

greatest Enemy, when dead: but remember, that we die all *. Soon will the Time come, when our Names also shall lie exposed to such Usage as the Survivors may think fit to give them. And therefore the Consideration of what is *the End of all Men*, should make us much too prudent, ever to set an Example of posthumous Rancour: and incline us, by treating the Memories of others with generous Tendernefs, to secure the same Treatment to our own hereafter.

The next Duty, of which Mortality should remind us, towards the Deceased, is paying just Honour to their Virtues. Honour is a Debt, owing indeed to worthy Characters in This World: but seldom well paid, till after they are gone out of it. As soon as it is too late, we begin to perceive, that they deserved to have been much more highly valued, than they were. And we should all of us learn from hence, to esteem those for the future, whilst they are alive, whom we shall esteem, when they are dead. But at least, when they have completed the Part assigned them here, and performed the principal Scenes of it well: then it becomes high Time, that those Applauses should be given them, which were their Due before; and their Memory be put in Possession of whatever they ought to have personally enjoyed. Flattering the Dead will do neither Them, nor indeed their Re-

* Eccles viii. 7.

putation, any Service : or if it could, would do, at the same Time, much Harm to Mankind ; by taking away Distinction, where it ought to be preserved. But as the Desire of leaving behind us an honourable Reputation, when we have earned it, is naturally a strong Principle in virtuous Breasts ; and a very useful one to human Society : it should be carefully cherished, by allowing to every Degree of real Desert its proper Acknowledgment ; and using the only Means, that we have, of making those yet live, who in every other Respect are dead to us. The true Immortality, God bestows on his faithful Servants, and them alone, in another World : but we should give in this all that we are able, the poor Shadow of it, an honest Fame, to as many as are intitled to it, in their respective Shares. Whoever hath gone through Life with only a benevolent Heart and upright Intention, though it be in a private Rank, hath Merit considerable enough not to be soon forgotten. And in proportion as other Things concur to raise the Character of Men, they should be respected both more and longer. Whenever therefore the Virtues of any Persons have been adorned by Nature with uncommon Accomplishments, and by themselves with valuable Acquisitions : when they have been called out by Providence into the View of Mankind ; have resisted the greatest Temptations ; appeared equal without Effort to
the

the greatest Difficulties ; filled with diffusive Beneficence the largest Sphere of publick Life, and yet paid the most accurate and amiable Regard to the various Duties of private Relations : when they have spent their Days in this Manner, and finished them in the Manner described before ; then the prudent in Heart will regret their Loss with the deepest Concern, and *have them in everlasting Remembrance* *. But

III. We may learn, from a considerate Meditation on the Examples of Mortality, very useful Instructions for our Behaviour, not only with respect to the Deceased ; but those whom they have left behind, any way peculiarly related to them.

The Death of a wise and good, of a near and affectionate Friend, is unspeakably the greatest of all Calamities. One single Stroke of this Kind may destroy almost the whole Comfort of our Lives at once : and a very few of them leave us in the most dreadful of Solitudes : destitute of any one to intrust with full Confidence, amidst Numbers to suspect and fear ; destitute of Help against our own Frailties and Infirmities ; and vastly more miserable for having been happy. Whoever is capable of these Reflexions, if he allows himself Time to make them, will sincerely pity all that have

* Psal. cxii. 6.

suffered

suffered such a Loss ; and equally esteem all that shew they are sensible of it. Right Affections are the very Foundation of a right Character : and Affection continued to be expressed, in the Manner it ought, for Friends and Relations at and after their Deaths, carries in it an evident Mark, both of Sincerity and Strength. When, instead of withdrawing from the mournful Scene, Persons fix their Hearts intirely upon it ; fulfil to the very utmost the whole *Labour of Love* *, to which Providence then calls them ; and, after all proves fruitless, transfer their Concern in a proper Degree to the Support of their Partners in Sorrow ; each evidencing their Consciousness of the others Worth, by a mutual Tenderness that goes through them all : the Knowledge of this Behaviour, in any Station of Life, must needs fill our Minds with great Honour and Regard for such as feel Affliction in so exemplary a Manner ; and dispose us effectually to avoid whatever may increase their Sufferings, and do whatever may alleviate them. But especially those, whom we are bound to reverence at all Times, we should reverence doubly in their Distress : and those, for whom at all Times we are bound to pray, we should then with uncommon Earnestness recommend to *the God of all Comfort* †. Let us therefore accordingly at present beseech Him, that he would be merciful to that House,

* Heb. vi. 10.

† 2 Cor. i. 3.

which

64 *A Sermon preached on the, &c.*

which is now peculiarly *the House of Mourning*: that he would be merciful to these Nations, which have the justest Cause to share in all their Grievs: that he would *turn from us those Evils, that we most righteously have deserved*; and continue to us those Blessings, which through his infinite Goodness we enjoy. Grant these our Petitions, gracious God, for the Sake of thy ever blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

S E R-

S E R M O N IV.

Preached in the Parish Church of St.
Bridget, London, before the Right
Honourable the Lord-Mayor, &c.
on *Monday in Easter Week*, 1738.

I PET. IV. 10.

*As every Man hath received the Gift, even
so minister the same one to another, as good
Stewards of the manifold Grace of God,*

THE Inducements, that we have, to relieve the Miseries, and promote the Happiness of our Fellow-creatures, are, God be thanked, both many in Number, and of various Kinds. Our Hearts naturally incline us to it: our Reason approves of it as right. The more we cultivate kind Dispositions, the truer Peace we possess within; and the greater Capacity of social Happiness, the sweetest Part of the Enjoyment of Life. Willingness to do Good, is always rewarded with the Esteem of Mankind; and Selfishness of Temper, the constant Object of every one's Aversion. We have frequent Experience in ourselves, what Suffering is; and are therefore

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inexcusable,

inexcusable, if we overlook it in others. We live in a World, where, if it were not for the Exercise of Mercy and Pity, the Face of Things would look dreadful with miserable Objects; and the Multitudes of Persons, driven to Despair, make Society unsafe. Besides, we know the Vicissitudes of human Affairs: and are nearly concerned, to encourage by our Example that Spirit of Goodness and Compassion; of which We or Ours may, on one Occasion or another, easily come to have great need.

These are powerful Motives to Beneficence: and yet the Influence of them is too commonly exceeding small. The Hearts of some Persons have but little Sensibility; and those of others, a very confined and partial one. Some content themselves with talking of Benevolence, instead of cultivating it; or with the inward Feeling of good Affections, instead of exerting them: and others give Scope to their wrong Inclinations, and their right ones, promiscuously; and so easily do more Harm in the World, than Good. To speculative Reasonings but few Persons attend: and fewer still are governed by them in Practice. Their Liableness to the common Accidents of Life, Men either forget amidst the Pleasures of it, or turn into an Argument for attending the more closely to their own Interests. As for Reputation; a few Acts of Goodness, well managed, will obtain as much of it as they are
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concerned about. Or, if they cannot be esteemed; they may hope at least to be courted. And even if they fail of this; they can affect to despise it, and appear, notwithstanding, happy; some in their Wealth, some in their Voluptuousness.

Our wise and good Maker hath therefore not left us to the Influence of these Motives only: but, as he saw it necessary, that in all our Ways we should be directed by Regard to Him; so he hath added infinite Force to the above-mentioned Considerations, by giving us the Knowledge of Himself, and teaching us to look on them as Evidences of his Will. He undoubtedly designed the good Things of this World, not for the Gratification of a few of his Creatures; but for the Benefit of all. And he hath divided them unequally amongst us; not that one Part of the human Race should sink under Misery and Want, and the other look down with Contempt upon them: but that Pity and Gratitude should be mutually exercised, and the Pleasure of doing and Receiving Good, felt among Men: that the Poor should be serviceable to the Rich; they, in return, kind to the Poor; and Both united in the Bonds of mutual Good-will, from a Sense of their mutual Dependency. These, it appears, from the Knowledge that we have of his Nature, must have been his Intentions. The same Thing appears further from the Nature he hath given Us, and the Circumstances,

in which he hath placed us. But that no Sort of Evidence of it might be wanting, he hath made known to the World his Pleasure by express Revelation also: requiring of us all *to do Good, and to communicate* *, both as we are Servants, bound in every thing to obey him; and as we are Stewards, appointed and intrusted by him for this very Purpose.

Let us therefore consider, with due Seriousness,

I. What general Influence it should have upon us, that we are *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*.

II. What Influence in particular with respect to those Methods of Charity, which are the Occasion of our present Meeting.

I. Let us consider the general Influence. Every Thing, which God hath done for the Good of his Creatures, is *Grace* or Favour to them: and every Thing, which he has placed in our Hands for their Good, is Grace of which we are Stewards. All the Means and Opportunities we have, of making the World, or any Part of it, better or happier; by our Knowledge or Wealth, by our Power or Interest, our Care or Pains, our friendly Behaviour or good Example; are given us in Trust, to be so exercised. How *manifold* these are,

* Heb. xiii. 16.

upon the Whole, it is not perhaps easy for us to be fully sensible: but we should each of us think very carefully, what his own Share of them is, and wherein it consists. For no one is without his *Talent*, though some have more committed to them than others: and they who have least, will be expected to improve what they have*; as our Saviour's Parable, very awfully shews. The poorest Person in the World, is capable of being useful, some Way, to his Fellow-creatures: and the greatest can never be above the Obligation of imitating, to their Power, the Beneficence of their Creator. They who are engaged in Business, far from having their Attention confined to themselves, have usually, by the very means of their Business, peculiar Advantages both for knowing and supplying the Wants of others. And such as have no particular Employment, have only the Privilege of a freer Choice, what Part they will take in that general one assigned to us all, of doing Good.

Since then we are appointed, each in his proper Station, Dispensers and *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*; it concerns us to behave as faithful ones: not to intercept the Streams of the Divine Bounty; nor confine to our own Gratification, what our Maker hath designed for the common Benefit of all around us. He hath not indeed fixed the Proportions of any Kind of Charity: for Circum-

* Matth. xxv. 14—39.

stances vary so infinitely, that general Rules concerning such Matters are impossible. And this Latitude should not give Anxiety to any good Mind: for we serve a most equitable Master. But neither should it give Encouragement to bad Minds; and make them imagine, that where nothing is ascertained, they may do just as little as they please. For God will expect from every one, what may be reasonably expected from them: and hath left this Matter at large, that we may shew, not our Backwardness to serve him, but our Zeal. Imprudent Zeal he never approves: but Goodness, confined within the Bounds of Discretion, is always more acceptable to him, in Proportion as it is more abundant. And, though not every Failure in Degree shall expose us to Punishment; yet *he which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully* *.

However unactive therefore we may naturally be; yet, as Persons intrusted by the Lord of all, it imports us greatly to be diligent. For Industry is a valuable Part of Faithfulness: and *slothful Servants* will be considered, in the Day of Judgment, as *wicked* ones †. Some Ways of doing Good may possibly be less pleasing to us: some Persons our Prejudices, our Passions, or Interests, would tempt us to overlook, rather than serve: and some Things,

* 2 Cor. ix. 6.

† Matth. xxv. 26.

that

that are only seeming Instances of Benevolence, we should be willing to mistake for real ones; and indulge a false good Nature, without Regard to Consequences, however bad. But when we consider, that in all these Cases we are to act for God; this makes a very great Change in the View of Things: and may both oblige us at some Times *to do with our Might* *, what perhaps we could least have wished; and restrain us, at others, from doing at all, what injudiciously we should have desired the most. Another important Use of looking upon ourselves in this Light, is, that how great soever our Talents may be, and how right soever the Use that we make of them; it must still be the strongest Reason possible for Humility, one of the most excellent of Virtues, to think, that all we have is given us, and all we do is but *ministering*. Then, at the same Time that our being intrusted will teach us these Things, our being jointly intrusted will teach us another: never to invade each other's Province, nor *stretch ourselves beyond our Measure* †; but as God hath distributed to every Man, so to walk ‡: for he is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace ||. God is the Judge, and a much better surely than we, what Employment is fittest for each of his Servants: and how enterprizing soever any of us may be now, or how discontented soever with the Narrowness of our own Sphere of Action: we may have Cause enough to be

* Eccl. ix. 10.
|| 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

† 2 Cor. x. 14.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 17.

glad at last, that no more was committed to our Care. Yet these Reflexions must not be carried to such a Length, as to let the Business of our common Master suffer, under Pretence of its belonging, not to Us, but our Fellow-servant; when there is no Impropriety, but only somewhat more Labour or Expence, in stepping a little out of our Way, to prevent the ill Consequences of another's Neglect. It must be owned a difficult Matter, not to mistake in these Cases on one Side or the other: but involuntary Mistakes will never be imputed to us. It must be owned a very serious Thing, to be *Stewards of God*: but it is a very noble one, to be employed under our heavenly Father in the Work, that he delights in most; and for the Happiness of our Brethren, perhaps to all Eternity. If indeed we are found, instead of this, either hiding the Talents committed to us *, or wasting our Master's Goods †, or misusing those to whom we ought to have ministred ‡; then miserable will our Condition be, when God shall say to us, *Give an Account of thy Stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer Steward* §. But on the other Hand our Comfort is, that a sincere Endeavour to discharge our Office as we ought, whatever our Difficulties, or whatever our Imperfections be, shall intitle us to the Sentence, *Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord* ||.

* Matth. xxv. 18.

† Luke xvi. 1.

‡ Matth. xxiv. 49.

§ Luke xvi. 2.

|| Matth. xxv. 23.

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With the Impression therefore of these Reflexions upon our Minds, let us now proceed to inquire,

II. What Influence the Thought, that we are *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*, should have upon us, with respect to those particular Methods of doing Good, which are the Occasion of our present Meeting.

Now these are of three Sorts, which indeed comprehend almost the whole of publick Charity: Places of Maintenance and Instruction for Children; Hospitals for the Sick; and Houses of Correction and Work for the Dissolute and Idle.

Relieving poor Parents from the Burden of a Family, which they are unable to support, must needs be a most welcome Charity to Them; and is evidently a very useful one to the Publick: for it tends to the future Increase of the Community, as well as to make the present Members of it happy. And teaching poor Children Religion and Virtue, one should think were plainly a beneficial Thing too. For let it prove ineffectual as often as it will; they must be a little more likely to abstain from what is wrong, for being taught what is right. Some Principles, some Notions of Life and Behaviour, they will learn: which then would you have them learn, good or bad? They may indeed possibly learn bad Things mixed with good, under the Notion of Religion.

But considering the Purity, in which Religion is professed amongst Us, there cannot well be much of this Kind; and there needs not be any Thing. Some Persons, however, appear to have great Fears of Superstition; and no Fears of any Thing else. But do they really find in fact, that this is the reigning and dangerous Error of the present Age? Is it with Superstition, that your Servants, and your Children as they grow up, and the Generality of the People, are infected; or is it not with Profligateness: such open and avowed Contempt of the Laws of God and Man, of all Sobriety and Order, as this Nation hath never known before, nor can long subsist under an Increase of it? But if you are in Earnest afraid of Superstition; be afraid where you have Cause of Fear. There is a real, and a dreadful Superstition gaining Ground, that of the Church of *Rome*. And the more ignorant Men are of all Religion, and the more prejudiced against their own Form and their own Teachers of Religion; the more easily they are won over into that most corrupt and formidable Communion. Think then, I intreat you, What would our Condition be; should ever the main Part of this Nation become, one half Papists, and the other Profligates! For as to the Scheme of Virtue without Religion: even if it could be put in Practice, yet there is a God, and he ought to be feared; and there is a Support in Piety, of which Mankind ought not to be deprived. But

whoever knows any Thing of the World, must see, that such a Scheme can never be put in Practice: that human Nature hath daily need, both to be restrained from Evil, and excited to Good, in Cases where none but religious Motives can do either effectually. And as these have been constantly found necessary, in all Ages and Countries whatever: so they are certainly of the most indispensable Necessity, where Incentives to Vice are in the greatest abundance, and Liberty is the least controlled by Law.

But to return. Together with the general Rules of their Duty, these Children are taught such other Knowledge, as may qualify them for Employments fitted to their Station: and then put out to such Employments; with a further Assistance, where it is requisite, of some little Matter to begin with, towards gaining a Livelihood. And this also surely must be of publick Benefit. Were they indeed either taken or kept away from other Business, more useful, or in which Hands are more wanted; were they raised, without visible Merit, above their original Rank, into one of less Labour or more Knowledge, to the Prejudice of those, who were by Birth their Superiors: such Things would be just Objections, though not to the Institution of these Schools, yet to the Management of them. But when only the Parents are kept from Distress, and the Children from Idleness or wicked

wicked Courses ; when Care is taken, to chuse them from a Condition suitable to that, for which they are designed ; and neither in their manner of living, nor their Instruction, to set them above that : every one will allow, it would be excellent private Charity, to do this for a Child ; and why not as good publick Charity, to do it for many Children ; since the greater the Number is, the less in Proportion the Expence ?

The second Method of doing Good, before us at present, is that of Hospitals for the Sick. And whatever Objections may be made against other Benefactions to the Poor, there can be none against restoring Ease and Health to them : against giving them those Helps, which their distressed Families cannot give ; and enabling them to be useful again to themselves, and to the Publick. Now Hospitals are infinitely the best Means to this necessary End. They are a sure Way of detecting Counterfeits : they preserve the Sick from unskilful Hands : they are so many publick Schools, where the Knowledge of Medicine is taught, in the most effectual manner, for the common Benefit of Mankind. They relieve Multitudes, who either cannot demand, or cannot obtain, parochial Relief : and they do it, beyond Comparison, in the surest, the speediest, and the cheapest manner that can be. So that, were we to suppose even great Mismanagements in Hospitals ; they would still remain preferable
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to all other Methods of providing for the Sick : and yet the Numbers and Characters of the Governors of our present Hospitals, secure them, as far as may be, against any Mismanagement at all. Another Advantage is, that ever so little, given to this kind of Charity, hath its proportionable good Effect : and the Diseases and Accidents, which befall the lower Part of the World, are so many and frequent, that ever so much given may easily be employed. Then it well deserves to be considered further, that Sickness affords a favourable Opportunity for good Impressions : and therefore most important Service may be done to poor Creatures in these Places, by shewing them from Experience the bad Consequences of vicious Lives, and the good ones of Regularity ; by giving them strong Impressions of the Excellency of Compassion and Mercy, at the Time when they are partaking of it ; and awakening them to a Sense of what their Condition requires of them, and their eternal Happiness depends upon. But the Benefit of Hospitals hath been so very well explained to the World of late *, and is so generally acknowledged ; that I need only add a Word concerning one Sort of them, That for the Diseased in Mind.

These poor Creatures are made by their Disorder, whilst it continues, entirely useless to

* See Dr. *Alured Clarke's* Sermon before the Governors of the County-Hospital at *Winchester*, and an Account of the Establishment of that Hospital, published in 1737.

Society :

Society: and many of them, at the same Time, exceedingly miserable in themselves; by the frightful, or the gloomy Train of Ideas, that possesses their Minds; and the vehement Passions, that so frequently agitate them. Now when Persons in low Circumstances fall into this unhappy State, as many of them do; their Friends are more incapable of taking Care of them, than in any other Case whatever: and there is no Way of attempting their Cure, which can possibly be attended with such Hope of Success, as placing them in Hospitals appropriated to this Purpose. Nay indeed, when there appears no Prospect of a Cure at all, to provide for them as Incurables is a most useful and excellent Act of Humanity: and the Beginnings, lately made, of a Provision of this Sort, well deserve Encouragement, and peculiarly want it.

The only Kind of Charity, which remains to be mentioned now, is that of Houses of Correction and Work for the Dissolute and Idle. The Terror, which these Places strike, is one great Benefit: as it prevents, at once, both Crimes and the Consequences of them. But where that proves ineffectual, the next Advantage of such Houses is, that Offenders can be immediately secured in them: removed out of the Way of endangering the Properties, the Lives, the Virtue of others; and made to feel, that their Attempt of gaining a Livelihood by easier Methods than honest People do, shall

shall only subject them to harder Labour, and deserved Punishment. Many of them, we are assured, have been brought by these Means to a just Sense of their Interest and their Duty. Very many more, we have sad Experience, much need to have this Kindness done them. And we cannot but know the Importance, both to Them and to ourselves, of checking the Growth of Wickedness, before it is quite too late to think of attempting it.

These then being the Methods of Charity now before you; consider well, what Obligations you are under, as *Stewards of God* for the Good of your Fellow-creatures, to assist in directing and supporting them.

Such, in the first Place, as are qualified to govern and direct any of these Institutions, are bound in Conscience, not to let so excellent Designs receive Prejudice, for want of a Succession of fit Persons to put them in Execution. For they may well spare a little Time, both from Pleasure, and from Business of other Kinds; to employ it in a manner, so productive of Happiness to the World, and to themselves. And such as have actually taken this good Work upon them, must ever remember, that they are now become Stewards of the Charity of Men, as well as the Bounty of God: and their Faithfulness in the Discharge of their Trust is engaged to both. They, whose constant Attendance cannot be expected, should at least

least acquaint themselves so far with the Management of Things, as to know, and be able to assure others, that it is, in the main at least, such as it ought: for, in many Cases, this alone may be a valuable Service. And all, who profess to enter further into the Conduct of Affairs, should seriously, and frequently, and impartially consider, what can be reformed in these Charities, and what can be improved. A meddling Spirit, fond of disturbing Things that are well, either to no good Purpose, or none that can be obtained, is indeed a very mischievous one: but prudent, peaceable Endeavours, to make every Thing as perfect as it can be made, are of incredible Use. The Work, in which you are engaged, is a very important one: and a small Defect of Attention, a little wrong Bias or mistaken Judgment, may produce extremely unhappy Effects: may diminish considerably the Benefit of these excellent Designs, and make even *your Good evil spoken of* *. The Support of voluntary Charities depends entirely on their Reputation: and therefore it concerns you greatly, to avoid, not only every Thing blameable, but every Thing suspicious; and to *cut off Occasion from them which desire Occasion* † to find Fault, *providing for honest Things, not only in the Sight of the Lord, but in the Sight of all Men* ‡. But more especially give me Leave to recommend to you, that as you are intrusted for the Good of your Fellow-crea-

* Rom. xiv. 16. † 2 Cor. xi. 12. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 21.

tures,

tures, you would have great Regard to their eternal Good: and that, as you are employed for the Service of God, you would express your Concern for his Honour, by endeavouring conscientiously to imprint a Sense of Religion and Virtue upon all that come under your Care in these Places. It is the Want of Religion and Virtue, that principally occasions this dreadful Number of Distresses and Disorders in the World: and so long as the Cause subsists, the Effect will follow. Let your Children therefore be carefully bred up to Piety, without Superstition or Uncharitableness; to Loyalty, and Honesty; to Humility, and Industry. Let your Sick be instructed and admonished, suitably to their Capacities, their present Condition, and past Behaviour. And let the Correction of your Offenders be made as medicinal as it can: and a charitable Care for reclaiming them, by proper Expostulations, and friendly Advice, be joined with whatever Severity it is necessary they should undergo. There are undoubtedly amongst them great Objects of Pity; Persons, of whom there is no Cause to despair: and surely these, as far as it is possible, should have some distinguished Regard shewn them. But so much Regard at least should be shewn to them all, and to the Publick at the same Time, if we have any Concern for its Welfare; as never to suffer Places, appointed for the Punishment of Wickedness, to become Schools for learning it.

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And now, having taken upon me to say thus much to you, it is but Justice to add, that Exhortations by no Means imply Distrust. *Having Confidence in thy Obedience*, saith St. Paul to Philemon, *I write unto thee, knowing, that thou wilt also do more than I say* *. And never can there be better Ground for a Confidence of this Kind, than at present: when these Charities are conducted by so large a Number of good, and wise, and experienced Men, under the Inspection of a Magistracy so worthy of Honour; and over which presides a Person †, whose uncommon Abilities we all see exercised every Day, for the Promotion of Religion and Virtue, of the Peace and good Order, the Welfare and Happiness of this great City, with the most exemplary Disinterestedness, and the truest Prudence, the most active Zeal, and the tenderest Humanity.

I proceed therefore now, with great Satisfaction, from the Duty of managing these Charities well, to that of supporting them. And one Way of supporting them is, by speaking of them with the Esteem which they deserve. These publick Institutions, and some of them more especially, have had vehement Accusations brought against them by many Persons. But stay to enquire, and hear, before you condemn. You may possibly judge wrong, concerning what ought to be done: and you may very probably be misinformed, concern-

* Philem. Ver. 21.

† Sir John Barnard.

ing what is done. Things which have happened very seldom, if at all, may be told as happening frequently. Mistakes corrected long ago, may be charged as continuing still. Inconveniencies may be unjustly heightened: Advantages unjustly depreciated. Should this be so; and should the Things, against which you are declaiming, be all the while excellently good ones: think only, what Harm you are doing to Mankind. Perhaps indeed, nay certainly, they are not perfect. But are they not highly useful? Or if not, cannot they be made so? If they can, use your Endeavours that they may. Shew a good Meaning, and you will acquire an Influence. But even should you after all be unsuccessful; still reflect a second Time: is it not more eligible, that these Institutions should continue as they are, than fall to Ruin? For, supposing some better Way might be contrived; is there any Certainty, is there any Prospect, of this better Way being taken? And if not; never pull down, till you are likely to build again.

But affording good Words alone to Charity, is very insufficient. As faithful Stewards of the Divine Bounty, you must communicate of the Wealth also, which is placed in your Hands for that Purpose; *and minister, as of the Ability which God giveth* *. The Importance of supporting these Methods of doing Good, so far as it appears from their general Nature,

* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

you have already heard. But when you are acquainted also with their large and increasing Extent, and their necessary Dependence on new Benefactions every Year; these Things will be weighty additional Motives to your Liberality: and I intreat your compassionate Attention to the following Report of them.

Here the Report was read.

YOU have now heard the most forcible Arguments, that you well can hear, for contributing plentifully to the Charities before you. Eight Hundred Vagrants and disorderly Persons, confined and employed, relieved and corrected, for their own Reformation, and your Security: Thirteen Hundred poor Children maintained, taught their Duty to God and Man, and qualified for Usefulness to the Publick: Thirteen Thousand sick Persons, of whom Care hath been taken in their Sickness. And these excellent Establishments, you perceive at the same Time, cannot subsist without continual Help: though, would but your Bounty afford the Means for it, they are capable of being greatly enlarged. Still a Provision is wanted for Multitudes of poor Children: and no small Part of them are either taught, or reduced, to get a Livelihood by Wickedness and Dishonesty. Still too many Offenders, of more advanced Years, infest your Streets. And a very large Proportion of the Sick, that apply to your Hospitals, are forced to be rejected,

jected, and left in their Misery, for want of Room to receive them, or Income to support them. Think then, what is incumbent on you in relation to these Things.

There are but two Reasons, and they are both very bad ones, that hinder Men from being charitable according to their Power: either Covetousness makes them unwilling; or Expensiveness makes them imagine they are unable.

If the former influences you; consider well, that your Happiness for ever depends on doing your Duty: but your Happiness even here doth not depend on enlarging your Fortunes. You may, if you will form yourselves to it, enjoy great Satisfaction in doing Good. But what Felicity can you possibly find, either in the Consciousness of having, or the Vanity of being known to have, ever so much Wealth more than you have any Occasion for? And besides, if the Enjoyment of *Man's Life* did consist in the Abundance of the Things which he possessed*: Charity may often be so contrived by Prudence, as not to diminish Wealth; and is often so blessed by Heaven, as greatly to increase it. I am sensible, that you have heard these Things, till some of you perhaps have brought yourselves by Degrees to be very little moved by them: but remember, God will expect, that having been reminded of them so frequently, you should regard them the more.

* Luke xii. 15.

And if it be Expensiveness, that with-holds you from Charity; in this Case also think with yourselves: for which Purpose is it, that your Maker hath intrusted you? For Vices and Follies, or for Pity and Mercy? You may indeed plead, that Luxury, by the Numbers it employs, is perhaps the most extensive Beneficence. But this is a poor Pretence, evidently calculated to make yourselves easy in acting wrong. Undoubtedly the Wisdom of Providence hath contrived, that many, who will do no Good in any other Way, shall however do some in this. But then it is usually done to those who need it least. A Number of Persons, well able to take Care of themselves otherwise, are maintained, Part in Idleness, Part in Professions of no manner of Use; whilst the true Objects of Compassion, the Infirm and Helpless, are left unregarded to suffer and perish. Luxury therefore contributes nothing to answer the Intent of the Charities before us. And even those, for whom it doth provide, it teaches at the same Time to ruin themselves by the Imitation of it. And in Proportion as it prevails, it destroys every where, both Virtue and Happiness, publick and private. But the numberless Evils of this most fatal Vice cannot be enlarged on now: and if the very little Good, which it doth, were very much more; yet, as no one will pretend to say, that this Good was the Motive to his Expensiveness; it can never be a Defence of it. We must not therefore think to make our Extravagance

travagance an Excuse for the Defect of our Alms: or hope in the least to mend our Plea, by calling those Things Necessaries of Life, which are indeed very blameable Superfluities.

Let therefore both the frugal and the expensive Man seriously consider, one, what Proportion his Charity bears to his Increase; the other, to his Profusions: and each think of justifying themselves, not to the World, but to God.

Possibly it may seem a good Reason to some, for their own Neglect of the Poor, that the Law makes Provision for them. And it is certainly an Honour to the Law, that it doth: but no Honour to Us, that it needs do it. Besides, there are very many Cases of great Distress, to which legal Provision is neither easily, nor properly extended: nor can it give by any Means so plentiful Relief, as should be given, to the greater Part of those, to whom it may extend. But suppose the Law capable of doing every Thing that needs be done; what would be the Consequence of leaving every Thing to it? That we should lose intirely the Means, which now we have, of proving to the World, and to ourselves, the Goodness of our own Hearts; and of making an undoubted Free-will Offering to God, out of what he hath given us. Persons of bad Minds may indeed take Occasion to neglect the Poor, from our Willingness to relieve them;

them: and thus, by their Fault, the Burden may fall heavier upon Us than it ought. But then God, who hath intrusted us, not only in Conjunction with others to do our Share, but separately by ourselves to do what we can, *is not unrighteous to forget this our Labour of Love**: but will take abundant Care, that whatever we bear chearfully on his Account, far from giving us Cause of Complaint, shall assuredly be Matter of great Joy to us in the End.

Think then attentively of these Considerations. They are not proposed to you, for raising a sudden Warmth of Affection, and serving a present Turn: it is to your coolest Reason, that this Address is made. Reflect in Retirement on what you have heard. Act upon deliberate Conviction, act from a settled Principle, in what you do: from that sublime Principle, to which *St. Peter* directs in the next Verse after the Text; *that God may be glorified in all Things, through Jesus Christ*: that you may express to Him your Sense of the Duty and Gratitude, which you owe him; that you may improve your own Hearts, by imitating the Goodness, which you honour; that you may convince Mankind of the Excellency of the Christian Doctrine. Consider yourselves, in this View also, as the *Stewards of God*: as intrusted for the Service and Promotion of his Gospel. For be assured, such

* Heb. vi. 10.

important and astonishing Truths as that comprehends, and you have lately heard out of it, were not made known to you, with a Design, that you should be indifferent about them; but deeply affected by them yourselves, and seriously diligent to engage the Attention of others to them. If then you have any Zeal for the Faith, which you profess, as Heaven knows there never was more need: shew Men, by its Effects, what it is; and give Demonstration to the World, how far the true Charity of a good Christian goes beyond the boasted Benevolence of Unbelievers. Invite Men by these Means to a better Opinion of Religion: encourage them by the same to a steadier Practice of it. *Be watchful, and strengthen*, by every Method you can, *the Things which remain, and are ready to die* *: but particularly make Provision in these excellent Ways, which are now proposed to you, for the Instruction of the Ignorant, the Conversion of the Vicious, the Spiritual Improvement, as well as Temporal Relief of the Sick: that so *the Administration* of your Charity *may not only supply the Want of the Saints, but be abundant also by many Thanksgivings unto God* †.

* Rev. iii. 2.

† 2 Cor. ix. 12.

S E R M O N V.

Preached before the House of Lords
in the Abbey-Church of *Westminster*,
on *Thursday*, May 29, 1739.

P S A L M C V I. 12, 13.

*Then believed they his Words, they sang his
Praise: they soon forgot his Works, they
waited not for his Counsel.*

THE same wise and good Being, who hath fitted the whole Frame of this World to the various Wants of his Creatures; hath fitted the Events of Things to our Reformation and moral Improvement. Were they to be considered as Events only, it would be Folly not to learn from them: but as they are Lessons intended by Heaven for our Instruction, it is Impiety also. The Dispensations of Providence, in which we are least interested, may teach us a great deal by Analogy, both concerning the Consequences of our Behaviour, and the Temper of our Hearts: for we seldom apprehend how fatally we are capable of erring, till we see how other Persons have acted before us, and what hath followed. But those Transactions of former Times, which extend
their

their Influence down to Us, as they naturally excite a greater Attention, so they generally reward it with more plentiful and more important Matter of Observation: and if we will not be made wise by the Experience of our Predecessors; the only Doubt is, whether possibly our own may not teach us too late.

The two great Methods of providential Instruction are Mercies and Punishments. Undoubtedly our Maker would always prefer the first; if it were not that enjoying them for some time, without Interruption, tempts us unaccountably to overlook, both His Goodness, and our own Duty arising from it. Sometimes indeed they, who forget God in their Prosperity, are moved by their Afflictions only to murmur against him: but for the most part Sufferings have a better Effect; recall to our Minds both our Condition and our Conduct. And it might be hoped, that the very deep Impressions, which Divine Judgments make, would naturally be lasting; or however, that when Forgiveness had succeeded Chastisement, the united Force of Terror and Gratitude would be perpetual. To recollect our past Deliverances, and dwell upon the Thoughts of our present Happiness, appears too pleasing an Employment to grow wearisome. Considering both, as Evidences of God's Delight to do us Good, must surely heighten our Relish of them: and preserving in Memory our Obligation to a proper Return, besides its being

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agreeable

agreeable to ingenuous Minds, one should imagine, would be sufficiently recommended to us, by our knowing, that the Continuance of our Blessings depends on this Condition.

But Mankind are strangely different in Fact from what Speculation may represent them. Be the Advantages of their Condition ever so great, many will attend only to its Inconveniences: and seem as if they had rather be miserable, than not be ungrateful. Others are too intent on the Enjoyment of their Felicity, ever to think, to whom they owe it; or think too much of the visible Means, to remember the invisible Author. And unhappily, they who have the liveliest Sense of the Goodness of God, seldom retain it long: *they sing his Praise, and soon forget his Works.* Favours, received personally by Ourselves, wear out of our Minds in a very little Time: but Mercies derived to us from a former Age, though continuing to subsist in full Force, though perhaps improved, affect us no otherwise than the Blessing of constant Health doth; which tempts Many to be irregular, for One whom it makes thankful. Then, to complete the Unhappiness, some who preserve the most lasting Memory of Divine Favours, remember them often partially, and to bad Purposes: deduce from them wrong Conclusions, and are led by them into unjustifiable Behaviour. Though they do not *forget his Works, they wait not for his Counsel*; but inconsiderately follow
2 their

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their own Imaginations: or if Instruction forces itself upon them, *they will not abide it* *; nor bear to be restrained, even by the Voice of Heaven.

Now the obvious Method of securing Events of Importance, both from Oblivion and Misconstruction, is by appointing stated and solemn Commemorations of them. God himself hath done this, to preserve a just Sense of his Works of Creation and Redemption: but the Celebration of his providential Goodness he hath left, as it was natural, to human Care. And serious Care ought to be taken; as on the one Hand, that Institutions of this Kind be neither debased to low Occasions, nor perverted to ill Uses: so on the other, that *they, whom the Lord hath redeemed and delivered from the Hand of the Enemy, may offer unto him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and tell out his Works with Gladness; exalt him in the Congregation of the People, and praise him in the Seat of the Elders* †.

This is the Duty, which we are now assembled to perform: and the two Things, requisite to perform it as we ought, are,

I. To consider the Nature of the Blessing, which we commemorate:

II. The Behaviour, to which it directs us.

* So the old Translation.

† Ps. cvii. 2, 22, 32.

I. In speaking of the Blessings on this Day restored to us, the preceding Evils must unavoidably be mentioned : and all Persons ought to bear with the Mention of what all contributed to, and shared in. To whom the chief Load of Guilt was imputable, the publick Voice hath most justly declared : but every Order of Men was blameable, and every Order punished. First, a Zeal excessively angry, for it must be acknowledged, was shewn in the Church, against a very provoking Sect of Zealots : and illegal Powers were exercised, to a dangerous Degree, in the State ; when the Bounds of legal Power were less clearly fixed. Then Fears and Resentments carried good Men too far : and gave bad Men an Opportunity of leading them insensibly further still, by very wicked Arts : till they were neither sure of retreating with Safety, nor yet could go forward without great Guilt. Concessions were made them, in some Cases too large ; in most, if not all, very sufficient. But these came too late. The Minds of Men were exasperated, and Confidence in each other lost : so that, instead of reconciling, they only gave Ground of Advantage for adding new Demands, which the Makers of them well knew, could not be granted. Insisting however that they should, from Discontents they broke out into Tumults ; and Tumults soon heightened into open Rebellion. To have lived in *these Beginnings of Sorrows* * must

* Mark xiii. 8.

have

have been very dreadful: but how much more, when Discord had brought forth its perfect Work; had involved the three Nations in Bloodshed, and the numberless Distresses, that belong to Civil Wars. After infinite Sacrilege and Devastation, committed under Colour of Religion and Freedom, War indeed ceased for a Time: but the Fruits of War continued. The primitive Form of our Ecclesiastical Government was illegally abolished: the Universities, the Clergy, the Body of the People most cruelly oppressed: till one Part of the Conquerors attempting to extend their Oppression over the rest, they took a desperate Resolution, with which they persuaded each other Heaven had inspired them, to establish Themselves by overturning the Whole. Then the Majesty of the Crown, the Honours of the Nobility, the Privileges of the Commons, fell a promiscuous Sacrifice, as the Church had done before, to Enthusiastick Fury. Fresh Commotions and a new Effusion of Blood attended this Catastrophe. The Subverters of lawful Authority by Force, underwent repeated Subversions of their own one by another: the Patrons of unbounded Liberty sunk under the Dominion of absolute Tyranny: the Asserters of an imaginary Purity in Religion, promoted its being defiled with pernicious Corruptions: and, by a most instructive Severity of Providence, all in their Turns were made *to eat of the Fruit of their own Way, and were filled*

filled with their own Devices *, to so surprizing a Degree of Exactness; that there was not perhaps any one ill Thing, which either Side did, but the Justice of God returned it visibly upon them.

Such was the State of our Ancestors for many Years: groaning under their present Evils, and *their Hearts failing them for Fear, and for looking after those Things which were coming on the Earth* †. But most unexpectedly, when all Attempts for restoring our Government and Laws had proved ineffectual; when the few remaining Defenders of them had neither Strength of their own, nor Hope of Assistance from abroad; when their Opposers had all the Power of the Nation in their Hands; and, however divided amongst themselves, were engaged by Principle and Interest, by Fear and Hatred, to support their common Cause: then did God *bow the Heart of this People, even as the Heart of one Man* ‡, to recall their exiled Sovereign, and re-establish their ancient Constitution in Church and State. *The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous Works, that they ought to be had in Remembrance* ||. *Praised be the Lord daily: even the God who helpeth us, and poureth his Benefits upon us* §.

* Prov. i. 31.
|| Psal. cxi. 4.

† Luke xxi. 26.
§ Ibid. lxviii. 19.

‡ 2 Sam. xix. 14.

But

But great as this Deliverance was; yet every Fibre of such a *Root of Bitterness* * could not be extirpated immediately: and a new Evil *sprung up* from it, which once more threatened us with Ruin. Our Princes, deprived in their tender Years of the Instruction and Example of their Royal Father, banished into the Midst of Temptation, and seeing and feeling the terrible Effects of a pretended or misguided Zeal for our Liberties and Religion; returned to us with Dispositions unfavourable to Both. These, in the Reign of the younger of them, had reduced us to the very Extremity of Danger: when the Mercy of Providence, again interposing, delivered us; and not only completed, but we hope hath secured to us for ever, the whole Blessing of the Restoration, under our present happy Establishment. Our Sovereign, we are sure, hath the sincerest Regard both to our Civil and Religious Rights: his Posterity have deeply imbibed the same generous Principle: and all, that we can have to fear, must be from ourselves.

II. Let us therefore proceed to consider, what Behaviour the great Event, which we commemorate, prescribes: what is the *Counsel*, which God hath given us by it.

The greatest Part of the Instruction indeed must arise from our Sufferings: but the whole

* Heb. xii. 15.

Power of making Advantage of it, arises from our Deliverance. And our Sufferings being caused by mutual Vehemence, and our Deliverance being effected in Peace: both may well dispose us to a mild Consideration of what they teach. To make Invectives now, against Persons who are gone long ago to answer for their Sins before God, can be of little Benefit: and to charge others rashly with inheriting their Faults, may be great Injustice: besides that Generosity should restrain one Side from Bitterness; and Decency, the other. Undoubtedly Caution, to prevent the Repetition of past Evils, is highly requisite. But where so large a Proportion of them was brought about by such as meant it not, the most needful Caution is, that we each of us avoid falling into the same Error: that we recollect, whatever our Station or Profession be, not only the Injuries, which our Predecessors in the same underwent, but chiefly those which they did; and apply our Knowledge of former Times, not to exasperate Others, but to amend or warn Ourselves. This is the Use, which ought to be made of the plainest Parts of the History: and much more should we take Care, not to grow warm about the doubtful ones: but allowing Men to differ from us, as they may very innocently, concerning the Characters and Conduct of Persons and Parties formerly, endeavour all to agree in the one material Point, our own Conduct now. And surely the Period of Time before our View,
suggests

suggests very plainly most important Directions to every sort of Persons amongst us.

It must remind the Governors of the Established Church, that rigorous Treatment of such as dissent from it, and Endeavours to extend their own Authority, or Influence, beyond reasonable Bounds, are Methods as contrary to Prudence, as they are to Religion: that neither Learning, nor Piety, nor Eminence in other Virtues, will be able to support them, without a suitable Degree of Humility and Forbearance; but that Care to be inoffensive, and Diligence to be useful, are their true Strength. And at the same Time, they, who are prejudiced against the Established Church, ought to remember, that its Ruin was attended with that of the whole Constitution: that there followed in its Place, first another Church-power, allowed to be much more terrible, then all manner of Confusion: and this continued, till Providence re-established us on the old Foundation. So that even in those Times their Schemes were far from producing any Good: and it cannot be fitting to revive them now; when, God be thanked, there never was so little of the bad Spirit, which they pretend to fear. We do not desire to oppress: we do not desire to be formidable. We only desire Protection and Support in serving the Cause of Religion and Virtue: and it is a very unkind and discouraging Return made us, for avoiding the Faults im-

puted to our Predecessors; if some will not see it, and others will give us no Proof of their seeing it.

From the Occurrences of the same Times, Counsellors of Princes ought to learn, that the great Interest of the Sovereign and their own is, never to bear hard upon the Liberties of the People; for they will restore themselves with dangerous Force: never to give them Jealousy; for too often scarce any Thing will remove it: never to despise even their less reasonable Complaints; but, as far as it is possible, always promote the publick Good by Methods agreeable to the publick Inclination. And the several Parts of the Legislature should learn, each to maintain their own Privileges with calm Resolution; but to abstain religiously from mutual Encroachments: for not only the sacred Obligation of Justice requires it; but Experience hath shewn, that when once the inward Balance of a Constitution is broken, endless Disorders are likely to follow: and no Part of the Whole is in Danger of suffering more, than that which at first appeared to be the Gainer.

But besides the separate Admonitions, given by the History of this Day to particular Sorts of Persons; the Instruction, which it offers to us all in common, deserves our serious Attention.

Much of the Misery, undergone by these Nations, was owing to that unhappy Prone-ness, which there is in Mankind, not only to magnify the real Inconveniencies of their Condition, but to add imaginary ones to them. And their own ill Conduct is always the last Thing on which they charge them; that of their Superiors, usually the first. For these Inconveniencies, they flatter themselves in the next Place, there must be some Remedy: and then, whatever Scheme for Reformation either their own Imagination presents, or any Body else suggests, they embrace it immediately, run hastily away with it; and soon grow too vehement, ever to consider, whether it be not impracticable or ineffectual, unjust or pernicious. Indeed to be absolutely against all Changes, is either great Folly, or great Wickedness. Things may have been wrong constituted originally: they may have degenerated since: they may be attended now with different Circumstances; and Alterations may both be reasonable to cure present Complaints, and necessary to prevent worse Disorders. But still the general Presumption should always be in Favour of what is established: and no Innovations, greater than need, ought ever to be attempted. Interest, Opinion, Resentment, Warmth of Temper, place different Things before different Persons, in very strong Lights: too strong perhaps to see them distinctly; at least, to observe every Thing connected with them. On these Views however they boldly

act: heat one another, sometimes by Concurrency, sometimes by Opposition: doubt nothing in themselves, suspect nothing in those who join with them, pardon nothing in those who differ from them: destroy the Quiet of Numbers who have not deserved it, as well as their own: and all to do Mischief, it may be, instead of Good; even though they intend Good. For not only Projects, that look plausible to such Persons, may be very hurtful notwithstanding; perhaps to Themselves, perhaps to Others, who have an equal Right to be considered: but supposing them innocent, supposing them beneficial; yet attempting them rashly, may do unknown Harm, should they miscarry; and cost infinitely too dear, should they succeed. If a Nation is to be put into a Ferment for them; and the Multitude called in, to be vehement about Matters, of which they are no Judges: this in itself is a dreadful Evil; and may possibly rise to a destructive Height. For in some Circumstances it is much easier to inflame Persons, than to foresee when they will cool: and there is one Point of yet greater Importance than reforming Faults, preserving Reverence to Authority. If this be once lost, possibly a blameless Conduct of Affairs, which yet no Body can ever promise, may not restore it: and unless it be restored, every Thing will be levelled. Sooner or later indeed, God knows how long it may be first, some sort of Order must return; but, without the peculiar Interpo-

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sition of a kind Providence, the beautiful Order of a Free Government will not. And it ought to be well considered, that Persons who begin with moderate and most laudable Intentions, may forget Themselves, may be entangled with Others, may be led or driven into doing what they greatly disapprove; or may lose all Power of stopping Mischief, when it is once set to work; and have nothing left, but to perish with the Ship in the Storm, which they have helped to raise. These Dangers indeed cannot be Reasons for complying with every Thing: for in vain will Heaven have restored to us our happy Form of Government, if we suffer it to be a Form only. But they are powerful Reasons for thinking coolly what deserves Opposition, and opposing it with Temper: for considering who are the Persons really to blame, in what Degree upon the whole they are so, and how difficult it is not to be so: for redressing Grievances by no other than regular Methods; and waiting for Opportunities, not forcing them: for examining faithfully the Purity of our own Intentions; for asking ourselves often, how far we mean to go; and observing carefully, what those Persons aim at, with whom we are engaged: for weighing well what Remedies the publick Constitution will bear, under what it will be likely to sink; and seriously recollecting, how great Multitudes have their Fate involved in that of the Whole. There can be no Cautions more evidently just than these; though we

had not had Experience to teach us so awfully, that for want of regarding them in the Times now before us, no one Scheme ended as it was designed at first. Every Thing was proposed to be reformed into Perfection: every Thing, instead of that, was compleatly brought to Ruin: and happy did Men think themselves, with very good Cause, when at last they were able to get back into the Situation, which they had imagined before to be so intolerable. *Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples: and they are written for our Admonition* *.

Nor let it be replied, that though the bold Attempts for Reformation and Liberty miscarried then, they may succeed another Time. Let us rather reflect, that though the Confusion and Slavery, which they introduced, proved but temporary then, the next Trial may perpetuate them. Liberty is a Blessing of such unspeakable Value, that no Wonder if the very Name of it be dear to Men: but the Name misapplied was fatal to our Forefathers; and may be so to Us. Licentiousness of Speech and Writing, a favourite and most entertaining Species of Liberty to the Inconsiderate, had the Effects amongst Them, which it must have every where: not only of injuring particular Persons in the most sensible manner; but of destroying that Regard to Stations and Offices, Ranks and Orders of Men, which must be

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

preserved, or Society must be dissolved. For when once contending Parties, by their mutual Accusations and Aspersions, have taught the People to think ill, or meanly, of all Persons that are, or can be their Governors; what remains for them, but to think in the same manner of Government itself, and treat it accordingly? Considering indeed, how artfully Men have learnt to disguise these Enormities, there may perhaps be no effectual Method of restraining them by Law, without very great Danger of hurtful Consequences from the Restraint. But to take this Advantage for being guilty of them, is a most ungenerous Use of Freedom against such as wish it well; and a most unwise one, against such as do not. All good Men therefore should labour unanimously to keep down this bad Spirit, each on his own Side; for in vain do we exclaim against what we indulge: and to discountenance it so strongly by expressing their private Abhorrence of it, that there may be no Reason, and no Pretence, if possible, for a publick Provision against it. Liberty cannot be supported, any more than Power, but by exercising it with Moderation. And they that overturn either, by carrying it to extravagant Heights, after such Warning as Providence hath given us, must neither expect any Remedy, nor much Pity.

But indeed there are Persons, who seem almost to think, that Liberty cannot be extended

ed too far : that every Diminution of Authority is so much Gain, every Increase of it so much Loss, to the Community. Now if this be true, Laws and Government are a publick Nuisance. And if not, Men ought to consider, what Restraints are requisite, as well as what may be abused ; and remember, that a Right to do Things, necessary to be done, must be vested somewhere, and must be exerted. Authority indeed is of a growing Nature : but so is Aversion to Authority : and Freedom unrestrained is Power unrestrained. No Tyrannies have been more insupportable, than those of the Multitude : nor can any Persons be more justly dreaded, than they who declaim for Liberty, in the Spirit of Persecution ; and demand it with Insolence, in the Midst of the Enjoyment of it. Such Behaviour plainly shews, that not content with being free, they want to rule : and since they cannot plead, that any harsh Treatment hath provoked them to these Outrages ; they are so far less excusable, than some of their Predecessors in the Times of our Troubles,

But however strongly we are cautioned against Licentiousness, by the Sufferings of former Days ; there hath arisen notwithstanding in our own, one very shocking Kind of it, almost peculiar to this Nation : that of publicly treating Religion with Contempt ; and after magnifying Morals, merely in Opposition to it, explaining them away to just nothing.

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Setting the World at large in these Respects, appears to be a principal Point, which some have at Heart: whose Character in Scripture might surely have given a more general Suspicion of them, than it hath: that *while they promise others Liberty, they are themselves the Servants of Corruption**. And too many, who have no Design of contributing to the Progress of Irreligion, see it however with great Tranquillity. Let Men think, let Men act, just as they will, provided they are not Bigots, but Persons of free Principles; the Publick is safe, and all is well. But is it safe, that they should be Bigots to Atheism, Bigots to Profligateness? Or can it be a Matter of Indifference, whether they have a good and right Rule of Conduct, though it were with some Mistakes; or whether they have none at all, or a quite wrong one? We own, that false Notions about Religion were one great Cause of the Sufferings of this Nation. But so were false Notions about Freedom, another. And why are Mistakes, or even wilful Abuses, a Reason for trampling upon the former, when they are not thought a Reason against exalting the latter without Bounds? We own, that Superstition and Enthusiasm ought to be guarded against: and that this is a most important Lesson of Providence to us, on this Day. But it cannot be right to guard against them, by rooting out of Mens Minds the Re-

* 2 Pet. ii. 19.

verence due to the Author of Nature : or by taking Methods, which, in the natural Course of Things, will bring one or both of them back upon us, as perhaps we have begun to experience ; or at least will bring Evils, not less formidable. Publick Happiness cannot subsist, without social Virtue and moral Self-government : nor can either of these subsist, without Regard to God. Nothing, but the Thought of His seeing and rewarding, can possibly have Force sufficient, in all Cases, to restrain Mens Passions, to counterbalance their present Interests ; to excite the Indolent, keep the Enterprizing within due Bounds, and unite all in making the common Good their common End.

We shall therefore neglect the most important of the *Counsels* of Providence on this Day, if we learn not, from so instructive a Dispensation of it, that just Sense of our Duty to the Governor and Lawgiver of the World, which if our Forefathers had preserved, these Miseries had never happened ; and if We preserve, they will never happen more. For as, on the one Hand, Religion enforces powerfully that necessary Caution, expressed by the Prophet *Ezra* ; *Seeing thou our God hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, and hast given us such Deliverance as this ; should we again break thy Commandments, wouldst thou not be angry with us,*

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us, till thou hadst consumed us : So on the other, it supports us with that noble Confidence, expressed by the Prophet Samuel : Fear not ; but serve the Lord with all your Heart : for the Lord will not forsake his People, for his great Names sake. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in Truth : for consider, how great Things he hath done for you †.*

* Ezra ix. 13, 14.

† 1 Sam. xii. 20, 22, 24.

S E R M O N VI.

Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in the Parish-Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow*, on *Friday, February 20, 1740-1.*

M A R K VI. 34.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much People; and was moved with Compassion towards them, because they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd: and he began to teach them many Things.

THIS Passage of the Evangelist expresses, in so strong and engaging a Manner, the benevolent Temper of our blessed Lord, and his tender Regard to the spiritual Wants of Men, that, if we suffer our Minds to dwell upon it a while, it cannot fail of exciting the same Disposition in Us: especially if we consider, that the View, which he is here described to have had, of their destitute Condition, not only induced him *to teach them Himself many Things concerning the Kingdom of God**; but caused that most serious Re-

* Luke ix. 11.

flexion and Exhortation, *The Harvest truly is plenteous, but the Labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send forth Labourers into his Harvest* †: immediately after which, He sent forth *his twelve Disciples* to preach the Gospel ‡; as he did the *Seventy* at another Time, on the very same Motive, mentioned by another Evangelist in the very same Words ||: thus opening the Way, by his previous Care of *the lost Sheep of the House of Israel* §, for uniting us all into *one Fold under one Shepherd* **.

To carry on the great Work which He began, of directing Mankind to present and future Happiness, is the End of this Society: incorporated by a Prince, to whom Religion and Liberty will have eternal Obligations; and established, first for the Support of Christianity in our Colonies and Factories abroad, then for the Propagation of it amongst the Heathens intermixed with them, and bordering upon them; but taking its Name from the remoter and more extensive Part of the Design.

Every possible Reason required our Predecessors in this excellent Undertaking to begin with inspecting the State of the *English Plantations in America*. And nothing could

† Matth. ix. 36—38. ‡ Matth. x. 1. || Luke x. 1, 2.
§ Matth. x. 6. ** John x. 16.

be more applicable to them on that Occasion, than the Words of the Text : *They saw much People, and were moved with Compassion towards them ; because they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd.* The European Inhabitants there being private Adventurers, neither numerous, nor rich, nor certain of Success, nor unanimous in Belief, established in several Provinces no Form whatever of publick Worship and Instruction. Too many of them carried but little Sense of Christianity abroad with them : a great Part of the rest suffered it to wear out gradually : and their Children grew of course to have yet less than they : till in some Countries there were scarce any Foot-steps of it left, beyond the mere Name. No Teacher was known, no Religious Assembly held ; the Lord's Day distinguished only by more general Dissoluteness ; the Sacrament of Baptism not administered for near twenty Years together, nor that of the Lord's Supper for near sixty, amongst many thousands of People, who did not deny the Obligation of these Duties, but lived notwithstanding in a stupid Neglect of them. Such was the State of Things in more of our Colonies than one : and where it was a little better, it was however lamentably bad. Some Persons appear very desirous of seeing, what sort of Creatures Men would be, without the Knowledge of God. Here a sufficient Trial was made of this : and it shewed to an unhappy Degree of Certainty, that they would be wicked, and
profligate,

profligate, and brutal in every Respect, and return in a few Generations to entire Barbarism. Possibly indeed they might have been delivered from this Evil, by that of Popery; which, always taking Advantage of Ignorance and Profaneness, had already begun to spread: and dreadful was the Alternative of one or the other. In these Circumstances, the poor Inhabitants made, from all Parts, the most affecting Representations of their deplorable Condition: the Truth of which was but too fully confirmed by their respective Governors, and the Persons of principal Note in each Province. There could not be worthier Objects of Regard, than such Complainants. And if they, who remained insensible, did not deserve Pity so much, they wanted it still more. The Society therefore, in Proportion to their own Ability, and the Need of each Place, first sent over Missionaries, to perform the Offices of Religion amongst them; then Schoolmasters, to instruct their Children in the Principles of it: who, after *enduring much Contradiction of Sinners**, and going through a great Variety of Labours and Difficulties, have, through the Blessing of God, made a remarkable Change in the Face of Things; and laid a noble Ground-work, of what, we hope, will every Day be carried on towards Perfection. But at present much remains to be done. Multitudes continue, as before, in a thoughtless Disregard to almost every Part

* Heb. xii. 3.

of Christianity : and Multitudes also are daily petitioning for Help : which to some we cannot give at all ; and to others so little, that they have Divine Service only once in many Weeks ; and several Districts of sixty, seventy, and eighty Miles long, have but one Minister to officiate in each of them.

The next Object of the Society's Concern, were the poor Negroes. These unhappy Wretches learn, in their native Country, the grossest Idolatry, and the most savage Dispositions ; and then are sold to the best Purchaser : sometimes by their Enemies, who would else put them to Death ; sometimes by their nearest Friends, who are either unable or unwilling to maintain them. Their Condition in our Colonies, though it cannot well be worse than it would have been at home, is yet nearly as hard as possible : their Servitude most laborious, their Punishments most severe. And thus many Thousands of them spend their whole Days, one Generation after another, undergoing with reluctant Minds continual Toil in this World, and comforted with no Hopes of Reward in a better. For it is not to be expected, that Masters, too commonly negligent of Christianity themselves, will take much Pains to teach it their Slaves : whom even the better Part of them are in a great Measure habituated to consider, as they do their Cattle, merely with a View to the Profit arising from them. Not a few therefore have

have openly opposed their Instruction; from an Imagination, now indeed proved and acknowledged to be groundless, that Baptism would entitle them to Freedom. Others, by obliging them to work on *Sundays* to provide themselves Necessaries, leave them neither Time to learn Religion, nor any Prospect of being able to subsist, if once the Duty of resting on that Day makes Part of their Belief. And some, it may be feared, have been averse to their becoming Christians, because, after that, no Pretence will remain for not treating them like Men. When these Obstacles are added to the Fondness they have for their old Heathenish Rites, and the strong Prejudices they must have against Teachers from among those, whom they serve so unwillingly; it cannot be wondered, if the Progress made in their Conversion prove but slow. After some Experience of this, Catechists were appointed in two Places, by way of Trial, for Their Instruction alone: whose Success, where it was least, hath not been inconsiderable; and so great in the Plantations belonging to the Society, that out of two hundred and thirty, at least seventy are now Believers in Christ. And there is lately an Improvement to this Scheme begun to be executed, by qualifying and employing young Negroes, prudently chosen, to teach their Countrymen: from which, in the Opinion of the best Judges, we may reasonably promise ourselves that this miserable *People*, the Generality of whom have

hitherto sat in Darkness, will see great Light *.

There still remains another Branch of the Society's Care, the *Indians* bordering on our Settlements. These consist of various Nations, valuable for some of their Qualities, but immersed in the vilest Superstitions, and engaged in almost perpetual Wars against each other, which they prosecute with Barbarities unheard of amongst the rest of Mankind: implacable in their Resentments, when once provoked; boundless in their Intemperance, when they have Opportunities for it, and at such Times mischievous in the highest Degree: impatient of Labour, to procure themselves the common Conveniencies of Life; inhumanly negligent of Persons in Years; and, if Accounts of such Things may be credited, not scrupling to kill and eat their nearest Relations, when the long Expeditions, which they make, for Hunting, or against Enemies, have reduced them to Streights. Now these poor Creatures also, diligent Endeavours have been used to enlighten and reclaim, on such Occasions, and by such Methods, as were least suspicious. For, without due Precautions, Harm would be done, instead of Good, where natural Jealousy is so industriously fomented by an artful Neighbour. And, after all Precautions, it cannot be an easy Work, to convert Nations, whose Manners are so uncultivated; whose Languages are so diffe-

* Matth. iv. 16,

rent, so hard to learn, and so little adapted to the Doctrines of Religion; with whom we scarce ever contract Affinities; and who seldom continue long enough in the same Place, to let any good Impressions fix into Habits. Yet, notwithstanding these Difficulties, which frustrated formerly a very expensive Attempt, another hath been made of late; and, through the Blessing of God, hath so reformed and improved the Morals, together with the Notions, of one *Indian Tribe**, that we cannot but hope the rest will be induced, by seeing their Happiness, to follow their Example.

You have now heard in brief the State of our Colonies, with Respect to Religion. And were the Prospect of further Success much smaller than it is, yet our Rule would be, to do our Duty, and leave the Event to Heaven. Persons of unwilling or desponding Minds may easily find Arguments to prove every good Design unpromising, or even impracticable. But the natural Dictate of Piety and Virtue is, to try. And the express Command of our blessed Lord is, that *the Gospel be preached to every Creature*†. Nor is only the Offer of Instruction to Heathens, but the Continuance of it for ever amongst Christians, the Will of Him, who, as *he gave some, Apostles and Evange-*

* The *Mohawks*: who compose two Christian Congregations, each consisting of above 200 Persons. Their Schoolmaster is a *Mohawk*. There are also some Converts amongst the *Oneidan* and *Tuscararo Indians*.

† Mark xvi. 15.

lists, gave some also, Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of his Body *. By endeavouring to our Power, that these Things be done; we shall pay Obedience to his Authority, and imitate his Example: we shall give a Proof to our own Hearts, that we are indeed his Disciples; and convince the World, that Zeal for Religion is not yet extinguished: we shall habituate ourselves to the most amiable of Virtues, Goodwill to Mankind in the most important of their Interests: we shall serve the Purposes of Providence; which have their Accomplishment, *whether Men will hear, or whether they will forbear* †: and how much soever we may *labour in vain* with Respect to others; yet *our Judgment will be with the Lord, and our Work with our God* ‡.

But the same God hath promised, that his Truth shall finally prevail upon Earth. And though we cannot say, at what Time, or by what Degrees, this Promise shall be fulfilled; yet we have Room to hope, that every sincere Endeavour is all along contributing something towards its Completion. The good Seed, which appears to lie dead for a while, will spring up in its Season: that, which seems to shoot weakly at first, will gain Strength insensibly, through the favourable Influences of Heaven: and *the Grain of Mustard-seed, be-*

* Eph. iv. 11, 12.

† Ezek. ii. 5.

‡ Isa. xlix. 5.

come a Tree *. Thus have these Colonies themselves grown: thus hath Christianity grown from its Beginning, both in other Places, and in Them also: nor have we any Reason to doubt its going on to do so still. In less than forty Years, under many Discouragements, and with an Income very disproportionate to the Vastness of the Undertaking, a great deal hath been done: though little Notice may have been taken of it, by Persons unattentive to these Things, or backward to acknowledge them. Near a hundred Churches have been built: above ten thousand Bibles and Common-Prayers, above a hundred thousand other pious Tracts distributed: great Multitudes, upon the Whole, of Negroes and *Indians* brought over to the Christian Faith: many numerous Congregations have been set up, which now support the Worship of God at their own Expence, where it was not known before; and seventy Persons are constantly employed, at the Expence of the Society, in the farther Service of the Gospel †. All this, we grant, makes but a small Appearance, in a Tract of Land, extending sixteen hundred Miles. But it is an encouraging Specimen, however, of what longer Time and more liberal Assistance may effect.

* Matth. xiii. 31, 32.

† Since the preaching of this Sermon, all these Numbers have been much increased. The Missionaries, Catechists and Schoolmasters are now, 1765, above 100.

Both the Hopes, and the Means, of supporting Christianity amongst our own People there, are just the same as here at home. And though the Negroes and *Indians* are prejudiced against it; and but poorly qualified, in comparison, to judge of the Evidence of it: yet they and all Men *have the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing witness* *. They may be convicted but too easily of transgressing evident Duties of Nature: and when once they see their Need of Repentance and Pardon, they will gladly receive the Gospel of Christ, of which these two are the distinguishing Articles. It will appear in itself infinitely preferable to what they have believed hitherto. The Teachers of it will appear, both from their superior Knowledge, and good Lives, worthy of Credit. The Professors of it around them, will bear a Testimony to it, in some Respects the stronger, for their being often condemned by it. And if such Arguments do not amount, after all, to the highest Evidence; they afford however very rational Motives of Assent, especially to Persons capable of no further Information: and were these Motives weaker than they are, yet, the Grace of God producing by them so powerful an Effect on the Minds of Men, we undoubtedly approve ourselves, by proposing them, His Ministers for the Happiness of our Fellow-creatures; and may justly be *confident, that he who hath*

* Rom. ii. 15.

*begun a good Work in them, will perform it * perfectly.*

But perhaps not our Success, but the Use and Benefit of it, will be called in question. Now of this, we apprehend, there is abundant Proof. The bare Profession and outward Appearance of such a Religion, as the Christian is, if taught in any tolerable Purity, must have some right Influence: and the Body of a People cannot go the utmost Lengths in Wickedness, whilst that Appearance subsists. What Lengths they would go in Time, if it were lost, as we have not experienced, we are not apt to consider. But a little Reflexion on the Number and Strength of human Passions, and the Abilities, which we have, of finding Means to gratify them, would give us a high Value of whatever hath any peculiar Force to restrain them. The one Institution of a Day of holy Rest, is not only, under prudent Regulations, a great Refreshment to the Bulk of Mankind; but greatly tends to civilize them also, by uniting Neighbourhoods in formed Assemblies, to acknowledge their common Dependence on God, and Relation to each other, with Hearts disengaged from selfish Attentions, and open to friendly Regards. Nor is it possible, be they ever so negligent Hearers of publick Worship and Instruction, but considerable Impressions, at least general ones, must remain upon their Minds. And most evidently the Impressions

* Phil. i. 6.

of Religion dispose Men to every Thing productive of common Good : to Justice and Veracity, and the Reverence of an Oath ; without which the Intercourse of Man with Man is not a Moment safe : to Faithfulness, Duty, and Love in the several Relations of Life, publick and private : to Mildness, Charity, and Compassion in their whole Behaviour : to Sobriety and Industry, the Pillars of national Wealth and Greatness : and to that joyful Hope of a better World, which is our truest Direction, and firmest Support, in every Stage of our Journey through This. Many more Persons will be thus influenced in various Degrees, than are usually observed : for a regular, inoffensive Behaviour affords little Matter of Speculation and Discourse. And though still the Generality may be bad ; yet, if left to themselves, they would certainly have been worse. Every body owns, that a wrong Belief hath great Power to deprave Mens Morals. Surely then a right one must have some Power to reform them. And if not so much as might be wished ; this is no more an Argument against the Usefulness of Religion, than of Reason : but a strong Argument, why Both should be cultivated to the utmost ; and carefully applied to so important a Purpose. If our Colonies had not experienced great Evils from the Decay of Christianity amongst them ; they would never have petitioned us so earnestly for Instruction in it, as they have done. And if they had not experienced great Good from

from the Restoration of it, that Earnestness would never have continued, as it doth, to this Day.

Nor will our Compliance with their Request be a Benefit only to Them, but to this Nation also. If They are dishonest and profligate; every single Person here, who hath Concerns with them, will be in Danger of suffering by it. If they consume their Wealth and their Time in Vices and Follies; their Trade will be gained over, from Them and Us, by our Rivals and Adversaries. And if the Ties of a Religion, binding Men so strongly to *be subject for Conscience Sake**, are loosened from off their Minds, which may some Time or another need every Tie, that can keep them attached to us; it will much facilitate their becoming Adversaries themselves. And we shall well deserve their revolting from Us, if we take no Care of their obeying God. But on the contrary, as Christian Principles will teach them Dutifulness and Loyalty; so receiving from hence the Support of those Principles, will recommend us to their Gratitude; hoping for the Continuance of that Support, will create some Dependence in point of Interest; and agreeing in the same Faith and Worship with us, will be an everlasting Motive to civil Unity also.

But another common Benefit of propagating Christianity in our Colonies is, that thus we

* Rom. xiii. 5.

shall

shall hinder Corruptions of Christianity from prevailing there, and sharing with Profaneness a divided Empire over the Land. If no authorized Teachers are sent, some Inducement or another will raise voluntary ones from Time to Time: and very possibly the less reasonable their Doctrine is, the more gladly it may be received. For if Sentiments of Religion, are not duly cultivated; as they quite wear out of some Minds, so in others they degenerate into Superstition or Enthusiasm. And accordingly many pernicious Errors, besides the above-mentioned capital one of Popery, took early Root in these Provinces; nor are they yet extirpated, perhaps in part newly revived: some, dissolving the Obligations of moral Duties: some, destroying the inward Peace of very pious and good Persons, and making Life gloomy and uncomfortable: some, leading Men to ascribe every Folly or Wickedness, that possesses the Fancy, to Divine Inspiration: some, inconsistent with our present happy Establishment: and others, destructive of the Safety of all Governments whatever, by forbidding to contribute any kind of Assistance to the publick Defence against Enemies: on which Notion the Representatives of the Province of *Pensylvania* have acted this last Summer*. Now let it only

* See a printed Collection of Messages, Answers, Addresses, &c. the Substance of which is as follows. The Quakers, *having applied themselves with great Industry to obtain an uncommon Majority in the Assembly, though they are not above one third of the People*

only be considered, how fatal a more general Belief of some of these Doctrines must have been there at present; indeed how very unhappy the Belief of any of them must be at all times; and the Importance of supporting Instructors in true Religion, were it only for a standing Guard against the worldly Inconveniences of false Religion, will evidently appear to be very great.

People in Number, refused to make any Provision of Necessaries for the Troops to be raised in that Province, as being a Thing repugnant to their Religious Principles, though his Majesty had notified under his Sign Manual, that he expected it from them. Soon after this they adjourned for above five Weeks; though the Governor made strong Instances to the contrary, setting forth, That as the new Levies were in want of every Thing, even Houses to cover their Heads, he was hourly apprehensive of their committing some Disorders. And being called together again by him in about a Fortnight, instead of raising any Money, they made a Complaint, that many of their Servants had been enlisted; and demanded the Restitution of them. The Governor answered, that they might easily have prevented this Inconvenience, and might still easily remedy it, by Methods which he pointed out to them; that he had done what he could to relieve them, and would continue to do so; but that forcing out of his Majesty's Troops at once all the Servants in them, would be unreasonable and unjust, very detrimental to the Service, and very dangerous to the publick Peace. Yet notwithstanding these Representations, and though Mr. Penn, one of their Proprietors, many Merchants and other Inhabitants of Philadelphia, and the Council of the Province, concurred with the Governor, and pressed them earnestly to answer his Majesty's Expectations, they came at length to this Resolution only: That 3000 l. of their current Money be paid for the King's Use; provided that all the Servants enlisted in the Province, whom they had computed at 300, and valued at 10 l. each, be first returned to their respective Masters, free of all Charges; and such Assurances given, as three Persons, named in the Resolution, should think fitting, that the said Servants are returned, and that no Servants be enlisted for the future. These being the Conditions on which the Money was given, it will not be thought strange, that when the last Advices came from thence, no Part of it had been paid.

But

But let us now think, what Good must follow from extending this Instruction to the poor Negroes also. The Servitude and hard Labour, which they undergo, be it as justifiable as it can, surely requires, that we should make them all the Amends in our Power : and the Danger, into which they have brought our Colonies more than once, demands the greatest Care to compose and soften their vindictive and sullen Spirits. Now there can be nothing contrived on Purpose, more likely to effect this, than Belief of the Gospel : which not only forbids in general, both doing and *recompensing Evil* * ; but commands in particular *as many as are Servants under the Yoke, to count their Masters worthy of all Honour †, and be subject to them with all Fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward ; for this is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience towards God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully ‡ : to do Service with good Will, as to the Lord, and not to Men ; knowing, that whatever Good any Man doth, the same he shall receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free* ||. The Tendency of such Doctrine must be, to make their Tempers milder, and their Lives happier. And no Imagination can be suggested to them, of any worldly Exemptions or Privileges arising from their Profession of it. For as human Authority hath granted them none ; so the Scripture, far from making any

* Rom. xii. 17.

† 1 Tim. vi. 1.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19.

|| Eph. vi. 7, 8.

Alteration in Civil Rights, expressly directs, that *every Man abide in the Condition wherein he is called*, with great Indifference of Mind concerning outward Circumstances *: and the only Rule, which it prescribes for Servants of the same Religion with their Masters, is, *not to despise them because they are Brethren; but do them Service the rather* †. Nor hath Experience at all shewn the Behaviour of such, in the present Case, to be different from what Reason would lead us to expect. On the contrary, in a great Rebellion of the Negroes at *New York*, only two of those who had received any Instruction, and only one who had been baptized, was so much as suspected of being guilty; and he was afterwards acknowledged to be innocent: but the deepest in the Conspiracy were the Slaves of those Persons, who had opposed the most warmly all Endeavours for their Conversion. We may therefore depend on it, that Success in these Endeavours will both be a Security, and every Way an Advantage, to their Proprietors. And if it doth procure the poor Wretches themselves a little more kind Usage, they will then be fitter to receive it: and at present, as much, as can be safely allowed them, is but their Due. The Apostle's Injunction was made not only for Slaves, but for Heathen Slaves: *Masters, give to your Servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven* ‡: *neither is there Respect of Persons*

* 1 Cor. vii. 20—24. † 1 Tim. vi. 2. ‡ Col. vi. 1.
with

with him *. And if their becoming Christians will help, as it certainly will, to obtain them such Treatment; putting together their Condition and their Numbers, there are but few Things, which, even on that Account, common Humanity more obliges us to attempt.

Then as to the Influence of Christianity on the *Indians*: it must undoubtedly restrain their mutual Barbarities, which it doth not appear what else will, and dispose them to a settled and orderly Life. By means of this, they will come to enjoy the Benefit of Agriculture, and of all the Arts that are useful in Society: they will of consequence grow happier and more numerous: and as they will become at the same Time more harmless too; it would be both an immoral and a false Policy, to envy them these Advantages. They have yielded up to us a considerable Part of their Country: and it is but common Gratitude, to shew them the Way of living comfortably in the rest. We have introduced amongst them both Diseases and Vices, which have destroyed great Numbers of them: surely it is fit, that we should communicate something to them, which will do them Good. It may be feared they are hitherto the worse for their Knowledge of Us: but they will certainly be the better for the Knowledge of our Religion. And the more they are prejudiced against it by the Wickedness of its Professors, the more need

* Ephes. vi. 9.

there is to lay before them in a full Light the Excellency of its Precepts; and to convince them, that there are Persons, who not only believe, but practise them. Nor should it be forgotten, that every single *Indian*, whom we make a Christian, we make a Friend and Ally at the same Time; both against the remaining Heathen, and a much more dangerous Neighbour, from whose Instigations almost all that we have suffered by them is allowed to have come.

But the temporal Advantages of propagating Christianity are infinitely the least. If we allow but the Truth of natural Religion, we must admit the future, as well as present, Happiness of Mankind to depend on preserving and diffusing the Knowledge of that Religion, And there is neither Instance nor Prospect of either of these Things being attempted by any other Method, than that of preaching the Gospel: of which the Doctrines and Duties of Nature make so large a Part. If therefore it be of Importance, that the People in our Colonies should worship the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and believe Virtue to be his Law; that the *Negroes* and *Indians* should *be turned from Idols, to serve the living and true God**; and that all should know, there will be a Recompence hereafter to the Just and to the Unjust: whoever deserves the Name of Deist in a good Sense, as it stands opposed to Atheist,

* 1 Theff. i. 9.

whoever is indeed an Enemy to Superstition, and a Friend to Mankind, will rejoice to have that Faith carefully taught them, by which alone they will learn these momentous Truths; to have it *told among the Heathen, that the Lord is King, and that he shall judge the People righteously* *.

But if *the Gospel of Christ*, besides comprehending the System of Natural Religion, be, by Virtue of its own peculiar Doctrines, *the Power of God unto Salvation* †: then every possible Motive concurs, for being zealous in spreading it throughout the Earth. Revelation indeed neither obliges nor permits us to pass a hard Sentence on those, who have never had it proposed with sufficient Evidence. *To their own Master they stand or fall* ‡: and of them only, *to whom much is given, shall much be required* ||. *For if there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not* §. But still, as *all Men have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God* **, and there is but one Name under Heaven whereby they can be saved ††; as Christianity is inexpressibly more efficacious for the Reformation of Mankind, than unassisted Reason; as our only Assurance, either of receiving a future Reward, or escaping future Punishment, must arise from Scripture;

* Psal. xcvi. 10.

† Rom. i. 16.

‡ Rom. xiv. 4.

|| Luke xii. 48.

§ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

** Rom. iii. 23.

†† Acts iv. 12.

and

and we have no Intimation in it, of any Person's enjoying that *Life and Immortality, which Jesus Christ hath brought to Light* *, but such as believe in him: these Considerations, without limiting at all the free Mercies of God, cannot but shew us the great Superiority of our own Condition, and make us ask, with great Solicitude, concerning others: *How then shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a Preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent* †? Our blessed Lord hath intrusted his Followers, to preserve his Gospel in Purity, where it is; and communicate it, where it is not. By their faithful Discharge of these Duties formerly, we ourselves were *delivered from the Bondage of Heathenism into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God* ‡. It now belongs to Us, in our Turn, to *strengthen our Brethren* ||, and *call them that are afar off* §: and where shall we find more proper Objects of our Care and Zeal?

Perhaps it may be said, They ought to maintain their own Teachers. But this cannot be expected from the Heathen, who are insensible of their Want of them: nor from those of our own People, who are too like Heathen, and have not the Sense of it which they ought. Such as have, do maintain their Teachers, where they are able. For there are very indi-

* 2 Tim. i. 10.
|| Luke xxii. 32.

† Rom. x. 14, 15.
§ Acts ii. 39.

‡ Rom. viii. 21.

gent Parts, as well as very opulent. Some whole Provinces have no Assistance at all from us. And in most, if not all Places, we are only joint Contributors. As soon as ever there is Room for it, they will be left to build by themselves on the Foundation laid: and the Society will go on to new Work. Inquiries are constantly made, what each Congregation can do: and Missionaries have been withdrawn, till they will do it. For we are not only desirous, but under a Necessity, of being as frugal as possible, by the daily Increase of Petitions for Help.

But some will object farther, that all the Assistance we can give Christianity, is too much wanted in our own Country, to admit of any Schemes for propagating it in foreign ones. And would to God these Persons would ask themselves, whether they indeed wish to remove the Objection, which they make; or only argue against this and that Way of encouraging Religion, to save the Expence of doing it in any Way. A true and judicious Friend will carefully avoid raising an Opposition between two Charities: which is a much surer Method of hurting the One, than serving the Other: whereas, with this Precaution, a first scarce ever suffers considerably, if at all, by setting up a second; but Mens Hearts are enlarged to contribute to Both. Every single Member of the *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge* at home, was originally incorporated

rated into Ours for spreading it abroad. That Society is at this Day promoting the same Knowledge in the East, as well as here; whilst we are doing it in the West. Many of us belong to both: and promise ourselves a larger Share of the Blessing of God in Each, for neglecting Neither. In these Nations great Provision is made already, and greater we hope will daily be made, for offering Salvation to Mankind. They who will reject it after all, must do so, and take the Consequences. But let Us, *in nothing terrified by our Adversaries, strive together for the Faith of the Gospel**: and not only sustain a Defensive War, but shew, that attacking the Dominions of our Lord and Master shall increase our Zeal to extend them. Our Colonies receive from hence a great deal of what is bad. We send them our Malefactors: we send them our immoral and irreligious Customs: we send them our infidel and profligate Books. Surely we ought to do some Good, where we do so much Harm. And consider, To whom is it done? To our Countrymen, and Fellow-subjects: distant indeed from us in Situation, but closely connected by the strongest Ties. To Them, to their Servants and Neighbours it is, that we are imparting Happiness: and possibly securing it to ourselves, or our Posterity, there, if God should permit us at home to suffer what we deserve.

* Phil. i. 27, 28.

Now this unquestionably right Design cannot be carried on, but under the Direction of a regular Society. For without it, small Benefactions could not be applied at all: and large ones must be applied separately, to great Disadvantage: no uniform Influence could be preserved, no settled Information had; nor any of that Experience gained, which results from long and extensive Acquaintance with the State of Things. What sort of Persons they are who compose this Society, will appear from the printed List. None of them receive any temporal Advantage from being Members of it. They are all obliged to subscribe a yearly Contribution to the good Work, which they undertake. A considerable Number of the Chief of them constantly attend upon it. And they will admit with Pleasure every serious Christian, who offers himself, and is qualified to assist in it. Their standing Rules are publickly known, allowed to be good, and faithfully observed. They give the World a yearly Account of their Success, with an Abstract of their Receipts and Disbursements. They deliver yearly the Particulars of them to the Lord Chancellor and two Chief Justices. And they have proceeded from the Beginning to this Day with great Unanimity in all their Affairs.

It hath been pretended indeed, that immoral and negligent Men are employed as Missionaries. And to say that this hath never
once

once happened, would be going too far. But that it hath frequently happened, or ever for want of due Care, is utterly false. Strict Examination is made at first into the Characters of all that are offered; strict Inquiry into their Behaviour afterwards: and exact Accounts required from them twice a Year, of what Duty they do, and what Progress they make. The most earnest Requests, the most solemn Adjurations are sent, that all, who can, would give any useful Intelligence relating to them: and great Regard is always paid to such Intelligence: yet very few Complaints are brought in, either from good Will or bad. Too many, it must be owned, of desperate Fortunes and Characters, who are or pretend to be in holy Orders, transport themselves into *America*, and behave there as it may be expected they will. But we have no Concern with any, whose Names are not seen in the publick List of Persons receiving Salaries from us. And the larger the Number is of vicious Clergymen, who go thither of their own Accord; the more is the need of sending as many worthy ones as possible, to correct their Influence,

Were there Room indeed for making larger Allowances, more Persons of great Abilities might be had. Were there better Opportunities for a learned Education abroad, more of the Natives of our Colonies would be fitted for the Work: which they would undertake

with many Advantages above such as go from hence. And had they Bishops there, these Persons might be ordained without the Inconveniencies of a long Voyage: Vacancies might be supplied in much less Time: the primitive and most useful Appointment of Confirmation might be restored; and an orderly Discipline exercised in the Churches. Nor would such an Establishment encroach at all, either on Liberty of Conscience, which ought ever to be sacredly preserved; or on the present civil Rights, either of the Governors or People in our Colonies. Nor would it bring their Dependence on *Great-Britain* into any Degree of that Danger, which some Persons profess to apprehend so strongly on this Occasion, who would make no manner of Scruple about doing other Things much more likely to destroy it: who are not terrified in the least, that such Numbers there reject the Episcopal Order entirely: nor perhaps would be greatly alarmed, were ever so many to reject Religion itself: though evidently in Proportion as either is thrown off, all Dependence produced by it ceases of course. To this equally pious and harmless Design, two great Prelates *, now deceased, gave a thousand Pounds each: and a Lady, incomparably more eminent for her Virtues than her Quality †, bequeathed the Sum of five hundred Pounds last Year to the

* Archbishop *Tenison*, and Sir *Jonathan Trelawney*, Bishop of *Winchester*.

† Lady *Elizabeth Hastings*.

same Purpose: which God incline the Hearts of all, in whose Power it is, to promote as it deserves! But in the mean Time, let it not be imagined, that the Difficulties, under which we labour, are too heavy to be overcome. Difficulties are Arguments for nothing, but more Diligence, and more Liberality. For if we stop, till we have every Thing that might be wished, When shall we go on?

Another Objection to the Conduct of the Society is, that they have sent Missionaries to some Places, in which there were already Christian Assemblies established and supported. But in one Sort of these Assemblies, there is no Christian Ministry, no Celebration of the Sacraments of the Gospel. In another, Infants are denied the Sacrament of Baptism. And in the least exceptionable, there are several Things, in which the Consciences of many, we apprehend with great Reason, cannot acquiesce; who were not therefore to be left destitute of publick Worship: especially as our Charter was granted, in express Terms, for *the Maintenance of an Orthodox Clergy in those Parts*. And the Members of this Church, I am sorry to say it, lying under peculiar Burdens in one considerable Province *, which
other

* In *New England* They are rated to the Support of what the *Independents*, who are the greater Part of that People, call, though without Right, the Established Church. And the Goods of many have been seized, or their Bodies imprisoned, for Non-payment. The *Anabaptists*, on their Petition, were exempted from

other Professors of Christianity do not, though equally Dissenters from the Majority there; they seem of Right entitled to some peculiar Assistance in return. We have obtruded the Service of the Church of *England* no where: we have settled no Clergyman any where, without the Inhabitants requesting it, and contributing to it: we have sent no Successor upon a Vacancy, without their renewing that Request. But if the Provision, which we have made for the People of our own Communion, hath proved instrumental at the same Time to bring others over into it; we hope there is very far from being any Harm done. Indeed Unity of Profession amongst ourselves, effected by Methods of Peace and Charity, will greatly recommend our Religion to the Infidels: who else may be tempted to continue as they are, for want of knowing with whom to join.

We acknowledge it, whoever is taught Christianity by our Care, will be taught it as professed in the Church established here by Law. There can be no Teaching at all, but in some particular Form. We think our own the best. Every Body thinks it far from the worst. At least our Converts will have the Bible put into their Hands, to judge for

from paying this Rate; and the *Quakers*, without petitioning: but the Petition of the Members of our Church was rejected.

N. B. This Grievance hath been redressed, under the Administration of Governor *Shirley*, in the Province of *Massachusetts Bay*: and, I believe, since the Year 1752, in the Colony of *Connecticut* also.

Them-

Themselves. And which is righter, that Heathens and Persons of no Religion should continue what they are, or become what we would make them? Our Society is by much the most considerable one for this Purpose. And were it now to be erected, instead of having subsisted so long: not a single Step could be taken on any other Footing than this; that the smaller Part of those, who wished well to it, must be concluded by the greater.

So good a Design therefore being so properly executed; the Expences, which must attend it, ought to be supplied. *The Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel**. And there is the same Reason, the same Necessity indeed, that the Missionaries in *America* should have due Provision made for them, as that the Apostles should at first, or the Ministers of our Parishes now. And if Persons of Character, being at Liberty, as they are, to exercise their Function elsewhere, are willing to undertake such an Employment as this, at such a Distance, on so small an Allowance as they receive from the Society: they ought surely to have it raised for them very chearfully, and *be counted worthy of double Honour* †, in the Sense of Recompence as well as Esteem, if it could be paid them.

* 1 Cor. ix. 14.

† 1 Tim. v. 17.

But

But perhaps it will be said, Supporting Designs of this Nature is the Clergy's Business: let Them take Care of it. And so, God be thanked, we do: and so, I hope in God, we shall, whether we are helped in it more or less; in such manner, as both to keep Pace with the Willing, and make Amends for the Unwilling. We desire not to boast, and we need not to be ashamed, of the Proportion which we contribute. But we may notwithstanding do very well to increase it. For there is so much expected of us, and we are so greatly concerned to answer every reasonable Expectation to the utmost; that if any of our Order have omitted taking sufficient Notice of a Charity so immediately related to their Profession, it is their Duty on many Accounts, to make full Compensation to it without Delay. It is indeed our Duty, on every Occasion, at all Times, but especially in an Age when no Part of our Conduct will be interpreted favourably, to avoid all Appearance, either of preferring *Riches in this World* before being *rich in good Works**, or of loving *Pleasures more than God*†. St. Paul took Wages of some Churches to do others Service‡. Let Us, out of the Wages which We take, do all the Service we can to the Church of God; and *distribute largely to the Necessities of the Saints* ||, particularly their spiritual ones.

* 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.
 || Rom. xii. 13.

† 2 Tim. iii. 4.

‡ 2 Cor. xi. 8.

But

But is the Support of this Design incumbent on the Clergy alone? Did not the Laity originally maintain the Apostles in their Travels? And ought they not still to be equally zealous, *that the Word of the Lord may have free Course, and be glorified**? Do they not know, how very inconsiderable the Benefices of far the greatest Part of the Clergy are; what Hospitality is required of the rest of us; and how large Demands are continually made upon us for Charities of various Kinds: to the Poor of our Parishes and Neighbourhoods, of our Brethren, their Widows and Orphans; to every pious and compassionate Use, publick or private? And are they not sensible also, that were We ever so deficient, this excuses not Them: that every Man's Duty is, not to guard against doing more Good than comes to his Share, but to do willingly what he can; and that each one's Reward shall be in Proportion to his Work?

Whoever therefore finds himself disposed to make Objections, let him examine, what is at the Bottom of them: whether it be not really Disregard to Religion, or Want of Humanity; some groundless Prejudice, or some wrong Attachment to Self-Interest or Self-Gratification. If so, let him first plant the Gospel in his own Heart: and all his Pleas against contributing to the Propagation of it, will soon vanish.

* 2 Thess. iii. 1.

Every

Every Man's Charities indeed ought to be left to his own Choice. But so many, even of those who are bountiful in other Ways, neglect pious Uses almost entirely, that good Persons have both Opportunity and Reason for allotting to These a large Proportion of their Beneficence. And amongst these, as That now under Consideration is of too extensive a Nature to be thoroughly comprehended by every one, and at too great a Distance to make any strong Impression on the Generality of the World; they, who do form just Conceptions of it, should, in Proportion to the Smallness of their Number, be the more liberal to it: as in Truth there is Need. The only certain Income we have, is a Trifle: not sixty Pounds a Year*. The voluntary Subscriptions, though they are ten Times greater, are not a fifth Part of the annual Expence. Hitherto therefore almost all hath depended on occasional Gifts: which, after sinking much lower than they were formerly, for some few Years increased again. On this Encouragement, the Society, importuned continually for new Missionaries, with an Earnestness which nothing but Necessity could justify resisting, made a great Addition to their Number. And had the Contributions of this last Year risen much above the preceding ones, it had been but too easy to have disposed of them all. But on the contrary, through one noble Benefaction, of a thousand Pounds, hath been given †, to be

* Now, in 1765, not Seventy. † By Mr. Batt of Harpsford.

employed for the Conversion of the Negroes ; yet those to the other Parts of our Design have fallen very short : and a heavy Debt hath been of consequence incurred. This may possibly reduce us to ask Assistance, in a Method, of which, though authorized, we have seldom made use : being desirous, that *he who sheweth Mercy*, might appear to do it *with Chearfulness* *, and not constrained by Solicitations. But in whatever manner Application is made to Persons, we trust the same God, who hath provided for us wonderfully thus long, will now also dispose their Hearts to consider, that on Them it depends, whether such a Design, so far advanced, through so many Difficulties, shall be carried on still, and gain Ground continually, as it easily may ; or whether it shall fall back, and sink into Nothing, with very little Hope of being ever revived : that he will move wise Men to think, what the publick Interest requires of them ; and benevolent Persons, to regard the private Happiness of their Fellow-creatures : true Christians, to support and enlarge the Kingdom of their Master with Zeal ; true Protestants, to silence effectually the Boasts and Reproaches of the *Romanists* on this Head ; and all true Friends of our Religious Establishment, to endeavour, that it may gain as honourable a Pre-eminence as possible, over the rest of the Reformed Churches, in so good a Work.

* Rom. xii. 8.

Persons in plentiful Circumstances, and perhaps at a Loss for Ways in which they may give Alms, will here find one undoubtedly proper Way. And Persons in Arrear to Religion and Charity, have an excellent Opportunity offered them, of paying the Debt. They who plead the Multitude of other Expences, might, a very great Part of them, by withdrawing but a little of what they ought from their Luxury and Vanity, qualify themselves for Liberalities, which will turn hereafter to a much better Account. And such as make the Increase of Taxes their Excuse, ought to consider, that as Providence hath brought that Increase upon us, by permitting us to suffer so much from our Enemies, in that Part of the World, where we have done so little for God; espousing His Cause is the likeliest Method of deriving a Blessing on our Own; and if we neglect it, whatever may befall us there, we must impute to ourselves. We enjoy very great Advantages from thence: the Government, large Revenues; the Nation in general, a most beneficial Trade; every one of us, something or another, useful or agreeable in Life. It is therefore our common Concern, both to do Good where we have received it; and to do it in such manner, as may best secure our continuing to receive it. But they more especially, who are now raising Fortunes by Commerce with our *American* Settlements, or who possess acquired or hereditary Estates, of which that Commerce laid

the Foundation, they should think often, how much hath accrued to them from the Produce of these Colonies, the Country of these *Indians*, the Labour of these Negroes; and reflect very seriously, what Returns, possibly Justice, at least Gratitude, and in many Cases Prudence also, as well as Piety, direct them to make.

Some perhaps may approve one Part of this Undertaking beyond the rest: and whatever they give, will be applied, if they desire it, to that alone. Some may be unwilling to let their Benefactions appear: and such may with Ease transmit them privately: the Donation will be acknowledged, the Donor unknown. But though Charity given in secret, from a Principle of Humility, be laudable in the highest Degree; yet when the Motive is Fear of Ridicule or Censure from a profane Age, this argues a Weakness of Mind, very dangerous to those who are influenced by it, and very prejudicial to Religion: which cannot have a more seasonable Service done it, than if Persons of Rank and Influence, all Persons indeed, who inwardly wish well to it, would openly patronize the several Designs formed to promote it.

The Design now before us, both deserves and requires a general Co-operation, to produce its complete Effect: that they who are able, should contribute to it, in Proportion to

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their Ability; and they who are not, speak well of it, and pray for it: that we of the Society should be vigilant and active, prudent and impartial in our Administration: that Persons in Authority abroad should countenance and protect the Work; for in their Power it is, to forward or obstruct it very greatly: that the People in general there, should not only be willing to let all under them and around them *partake of the Grace of Life**, but earnestly invite them to it, *with Meekness of Wisdom*, and by the most prevalent of Arguments, *a good Conversation* †. But beyond the rest it is necessary for every one concerned in the immediate Execution of the Design, always to remember, that bad as it is in other Teachers of the Gospel to behave in a manner unworthy of their Profession, it will be yet worse in Them, if they take an uncommon Character upon themselves, only to dishonour it; and *compass Sea and Land* ‡, with no other Effect, than to make *God's Name be blasphemed amongst the Gentiles* ||: that They ought with peculiar Diligence to *follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace* §; *holding fast the faithful Word, as they have been taught, that they may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainsayers* **; that they ought to be *instant, in Season, out of Season; to watch, endure*

* 1 Pet. iii. 7.

† James iii. 13.

‡ Matth. xxiii. 15.

|| Rom. ii. 24.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 22.

** Tit. i. 9.

*Afflictions, and make full Proof of their Ministry *, shewing themselves in all Things Patterns of good Works †.*

These then are our several Duties; and great will be our Reward for performing them. Let us therefore, each in his Station, *arise and be doing: and the Lord be with us ‡.*

* 2 Tim. iv. 2, 5. † Tit. ii. 7. ‡ 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

S E R M O N VII.

Preached in the Parish-Church of *Christ-Church, London*, on *Thursday, May 5, 1743*, being the Time of the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity-Schools, in and about the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*.

ROMANS XIV. 16.

Let not then your Good be evil spoken of.

AMONGST many Excellencies, which unite to recommend our holy Religion, there are few that shew its benevolent Spirit in a stronger Light, than its requiring us, not only to abstain from every Thing sinful ourselves, but carefully to avoid giving any Occasion of Sin to others *. If the most innocent Action, that we do, will be thought a wrong one by any of our Brethren; we are strictly bound, either to omit it †, if we can without considerable Inconvenience; or at least to guard and explain it, as well as the Nature of the Case will permit: that so we may

* Rom. xiv.

† 1 Cor. viii.

neither

neither tempt him to censure us uncharitably, nor to imitate us against his Conscience. The former of these is the Danger, which the Words the Text most naturally express: and to keep clear of it, is a Matter of great Importance.

Attention to obviate Censures may often prevent Us from acting, as well as Others from judging, amiss. And where we act ever so rightly, yet if we are suspected of erring, though in Circumstances only, and seem negligent of that Suspicion; it may grieve good Persons, and perhaps weaken their Union with us; it may entirely separate from us the inconsiderate and wavering; it may give a handle to the Bad for great Triumph and Misrepresentation; and both incline them to grow still worse, and enable them to do still more Harm. Whereas prudent Care, first not to deserve Reproach, and then not to lie under it, may procure us Regard from Mankind, by shewing Regard to them; may secure the well-disposed on our Side, and furnish them with the Means of defending us; may convince even the Prejudiced of some of their Mistakes, and moderate their Vehemence in the rest. At least, we shall thus exercise a true Christian Temper, improve ourselves, and be exemplary to others.

But though we are concerned to vindicate all our Actions from injurious Charges, yet our

virtuous Actions especially. When Things merely lawful are condemned, the Damage may be small: but if worthy Deeds are vilified, Religion suffers deeply. And therefore, as we are now assembled to patronize a Design, which we apprehend to be a very valuable one, but which some have opposed and decried, the Erecting of Schools for the Children of the Poor, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That this is a *good* Work.

II. What are the right Methods, to prevent its *being evil spoken of*.

III. What Course we are to take, if that cannot be prevented entirely.

Little remains to be said indeed upon any of these Points, which hath not been said often already. But if Persons will repeat Objections, the Answers must be repeated too. And the plainest Truths, as they cannot influence at all, if they are forgotten, ought to influence us the more, not the less, for being frequently inculcated.

I. *First* then it must be shewn, that this Method of giving the Children of the Poor a Christian Education, is a *good* Work.

Now if we believe Christianity true, we must believe it is the Way to eternal Happiness.

ness. And were we to doubt of its Truth, we must notwithstanding see it is the Way to present Happiness. For it confessedly teaches in the clearest Manner, and inforces by the strongest Motives, every Thing conducive to private and publick Welfare : and nothing else doth so. Natural Religion, as distinct from Christianity, whatever Zeal may be pretended for it, neither hath been, nor is likely to be, seriously propagated : nor is it capable of carrying in it the Direction, the Encouragement, or the Terror, that Revelation doth. Virtue, without Religion, will perpetually be modelled by Peoples Fancies, and overturned by their Passions and Interests, for want of the Hopes and Fears of Futurity to counterbalance them. And human Laws, the only Restraint besides, extend but to a small Part of our Behaviour : and without Principle, they will be faultily contrived, and remissly or partially executed : Men will elude them in some Cases, break through them at all Adventures in others ; and having once learnt to despise Death, as they well may if nothing follows it, will have little Fear of what the Magistrate can inflict. All Ages and Nations have found these Things true : they are visibly so in our own, to an uncommon Degree : and Experience joins with Reason to acknowledge, that Scripture points out the only Remedy : *All thy Children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the Peace of thy Children* *.

* Isai. liv. 13.

If then the Belief of Christianity be thus necessary, Instruction in it ought to be early. The absolute Ignorance, in which we are born, and the Propensity we manifest immediately, to receive Impressions from what we see and hear, are an evident Proof of our Maker's Design, that we should be formed by Education into what we are to be. And had this never been neglected, Error and Wickedness had never prevailed. Now indeed, since they have, Instruction will in most Places, more or less, lead Children into what is wrong. But still it is the surest Method we can take, to preserve them from it. Were their Friends to teach them nothing, would their own Passions, and the Companions they would choose, be better Tutors? Their Reason indeed possibly might: and very possibly might not. At least it would come too late, and be minded too little, to be trusted alone. Where young Persons are taught from the first ever so well, and governed ever so prudently, it doth not always succeed. But such Care must afford vastly greater Hope, than if they are left to themselves without any, till bad Notions and Customs have taken root, till their Appetites are grown vehement, and their Tempers stubborn; till they laugh at Advice, and disdain Authority. If then we would prevent all the Misery such Wretches may suffer, all the Mischief they may do, all the Burthens they may bring on Society; if we would make them useful to the World, and happy in them-

themselves; the plain Rule is, *Train them up when Children in the Way they should go; and probably when they are old, they will not depart from it* *.

But by whom shall this be done, in the Case of the Poor? Unquestionably it is the Duty of their Parents. But many of them are Orphans. Many have Parents, who teach, or allow them to be taught, all manner of Evil: and most of them have such as want Leisure, or Capacity, or Diligence, to teach them the Good, which they ought; and at the same Time are unable or unwilling to pay others for teaching them. Great Numbers of them indeed are removed early into Families of better Rank. But how very little Prospect there is in general, that more Care will be taken of them there, than their nearest Relations took at home, I need not say. Will then the publick Instruction of the Church suffice? But alas! what Multitudes of them are there, that seldom or never go thither? The Laws that require it, are not executed: their Parents have not used them to it: their Masters are indifferent about it, or perhaps make it difficult to them: and what wonder, if in these Circumstances the poor Creatures neglect it? Besides, there is some Degree of previous Knowledge requisite to their attending publick Worship to good Effect. And the Minister, were they always duly sent to him,

* Prov. xxii. 6.

cannot alone ground them sufficiently in the first Elements of that Knowledge; nor in larger Parishes make any considerable Advance towards it.

What further Provision might be made in this important Affair, either by enacting new Laws, or enforcing the old ones, is not a Point to be considered here: but only, what can be attempted by private Zeal and Prudence; the Laws and the Execution of them continuing such as they are, and probably will be.

Now as to Persons in higher Circumstances: they must and will be left to themselves, to educate their Youth just as they please; and they, and we, must take the Consequences. But the Poor are many of them desirous to have theirs educated rightly. And most of them may be induced to it by those additional Encouragements, of cloathing and fitting them for Business, which are singly very excellent Charities, and, joined with religious Instruction, make a very complete one. Surely there can be no Doubt then, whether a Method so beneficial every Way, to the Children, the Parents, the Publick, should be joyfully embraced. The wisest and best of antient Legislators and Philosophers, have all prescribed a strict Education of Youth, as the Foundation of every Thing good. Both the Jewish and Christian Institutions absolutely enjoin it. In Protestant Countries

tries abroad, Teachers are universally provided for the Children of the Poor; who are in most Places bound by Law to become their Scholars *. Our Governors at home, both in Church and State, with the whole Body of serious Persons of all Denominations, have shewn their Approbation of this Design. The only Person, who hath attempted publickly to prove it hurtful, hath attempted, in the same Book, to prove *Vice a public Benefit* †. I know but one Author more of the least Note, who hath declared against these Schools: and He fairly acknowledges, that, “under a proper Regulation, something like them may be commendable ‡,” though he was led, by unhappy Prejudices and false Reports, to inveigh with great Bitterness against the Conduct of them.

II. Let us therefore enquire, in the *second* Place, what are the true Methods to prevent this *good* Work from *being evil spoken of*.

Now these in general must be, Giving no Occasion for just Objections; and, Returning sufficient Answers to unjust ones, Undoubtedly the former is the main Thing. For wrong Conduct neither can nor ought to be defended; and right Conduct will in a great Measure defend itself: yet not so entirely, but

* See the Dean of *Peterborough's* Sermon at the Meeting of these Children, 1740, p. 23.

† *Fable of the Bees*.

‡ CATO's *Letters*, N^o 133.

that

that a seasonable Vindication may be necessary for the best Cause. I shall therefore endeavour to set forth jointly, What ought to be done ; and, where any Accusation worth Notice hath been brought, What is done, so far as I have been able to learn, in the Choice, the Management, and the Disposal of these Children.

1. The Liberty of *choosing* fit Objects for this Charity is a great Advantage, which Hospitals for Foundlings have not ; and should be used with great Uprightness and Discretion. If we admit those, whose Parents or other near Friends are able and likely to give them a proper Education ; we divert the Bounty, which we undertake to direct, from such as need it : and there is but too much ground to apprehend, that some who have no Need may request our Assistance. If we send in Children to be maintained at a common Charge, whom we should else have brought up at our own : this is burthening the School to ease ourselves ; and possibly, receiving more from it, than we contribute to it. And if we allow the Recommendations of powerful Friends, or the Entreaties of Dependants, to engage us in undue Preferences : it is purchasing Favour from the one, or the false Reputation of Good-nature from the other, at the Expence of our Character as faithful Stewards.

The next Consideration, after the Necessities of the Children, should be their Fitness : both
of

of Mind, to take in the Instruction, which they are to have ; and of Body, to go through the Business, for which they are designed : otherwise the Pains and Money, spent upon them, may be quite thrown away.

Where these Things are equal, or nearly so ; the Offspring of industrious and good Persons, ordinarily speaking, should be sure of Admission before others : both as the Prospect of Success with them is much fairer, and as their Parents may justly expect the Comfort of having this Distinction shewn them by the professed Patrons of Religion and Virtue ; which will also partake of the Encouragement and Countenance, that They receive. Yet if the Fund, intrusted with us, can be extended further, to the Families of negligent, or even grossly wicked Creatures : as they certainly want Instruction more, so we ought not to despair of their improving by it. If they can be kept, for any considerable Time, separate from their wretched Friends ; though the Cost will be greater, yet the Advantage is so visible, both in Speculation and in Fact *, that very much Good might be expected from this Method, were it more practised. But even if they cannot be separated, yet what they learn at School will be some Antidote against what they see at Home : besides that bad Parents will often assist the Endeavours, that are used

* Particularly in the Girls School, belonging to the Parish of St. James, Westminster.

to keep their Children from becoming like them; and now and then have been shamed and reformed by them, instead of corrupting them. This kind Provision may indeed make some Parents only the more idle and extravagant: and so may that of Parochial Relief, or of Hospitals for the Sick. But for the most Part, they who are thus worthless, would be equally so, if all these Benefactions were abolished. The same sort of Persons neglected their Children, before Charity Schools were known, who do it now. And it is great Mercy to the poor young Creatures, to enable them to say: *When my Father and my Mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up* *.

2. In the *Management* of these Children, as teaching them Religion is the chief Thing proposed, so it ought to employ the chief Attention: which it may without Hindrance, indeed with Advantage, to the other Parts of their Education. In order to this End, getting by Heart their Catechism, and their Prayers, and select Portions of Scripture, is a Step by no Means to be omitted or despised. For Experience hath taught the Need of fixing thus in their Memories at first, what their Understandings will afterwards ripen gradually to comprehend. But if this one Step be mistaken for the Whole; they may be brought up in all the Form of Religion, with scarce any Meaning accompanying it. And though

* Psal. xxvii. 12.

very general and confused Sentiments of Piety and Duty may often be of great Use, both in directing and restraining Persons: yet sometimes it is possible they may do Harm; and more distinct ones cannot fail of being, in Proportion, more safe and beneficial. Their Teachers therefore should very carefully explain to them, as soon and as clearly as they can, every Thing which they oblige them to repeat; and make proper Trials, from Time to Time, of their apprehending, as well as remembering, what they are taught: in which Branch of their Work they may be greatly assisted, partly by some of the printed Expositions, with which they should always be furnished; and partly by informing themselves, what Methods are taken in the neighbouring Schools of best Repute. Another very advantageous and very pleasing Way of increasing their Acquaintance with Religion, would be, turning their Attention, as they read the Bible, to the more useful Parts of its History, by familiar and short Remarks upon them; such as their Instructors can make, and They can enter into, without Difficulty. Nor would it be at all a hard Matter, by the Help of almost any one of the small Pieces written of late in Defence of Christianity, to give them so much Insight into the Grounds and Evidences of it, as will furnish them with much better Reasons for believing, than they will ever have for disbelieving it. And as this is, at all Times, a Piece of Justice due to reasonable Creatures;

so it is, at the present Time, peculiarly necessary to a most unhappy Degree.

The Knowledge, thus instilled, must be constantly applied to the producing of suitable Dispositions. And above all, there must be diligently imprinted on their Hearts a deep Reverence of God, as the Almighty and all-seeing Ruler of the World; who hath given such Laws to Men, as He knows are necessary for their Good; and will make us everlastingly happy or miserable, as we obey or transgress them. This is a Principle, which will operate from the first, on every Capacity, in every Case: will make Duty appear important, and Sin dreadful: will teach them to feel the Insufficiency of their natural Strength, and to rejoice most heartily in the Grace of the Gospel; to be sincere and earnest in their Prayers, regular and watchful in their Lives, and through the whole of their Course mindful of the End *.

Constant Attendance on publick Worship is one inestimable Benefit, which this Education secures to Children. And to render it as useful to them as possible, they should be diligently taught, and I doubt not but they are, to approach the House of God with the utmost Seriousness, to hearken reverently to his Word read and preached, and perform their Part of the Liturgy in such a Manner, as may best en-

* See the Lord Bishop of *Sodor and Man*'s Sermon, preached on the same Occasion with this, in the Year 1724.

gage their own Attention; and yet give others no Disturbance, by the Noise of their Responses, or the Loudness of their Singing: concerning which Particulars, express Directions have been given by the Trustees. The Indiscretion of teaching them difficult and unusual Tunes is, I hope, nearly corrected every where. But a reasonable Degree of Skill in the common ones, will be a needful Support of the Harmony of the Congregation, a Means of familiarizing good Thoughts to their Minds, and of making Divine Service more cheerful and pleasing to them: which they should be engaged by every Motive to frequent, as long as they live: else all that they have been taught will soon wear out; and the Lord's Day become the most ruinous, instead of the most beneficial, Part of their Time.

It must be expected, that we should recommend to these Children the Faith and Worship of our own Communion, as all other Christians do: and teach them that Respect to the Church that they are Members of, and the Ministers who officiate in it, which the Scripture * in very strong Terms requires they should have. But all this both may and ought to be done with such Temper and Prudence, as not in the least to serve the Purposes of Superstition and Uncharitableness, or civil or religious Tyranny; but of true Piety and Virtue alone: which they will never learn from those, of

* Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Theff. v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 17.

whom they think either ill or meanly. And whatever Designs of carrying Things further, have been either justly or unjustly suspected, some Time ago, in some few Cases; yet there doth not appear any Ground of Suspicion remaining. And as I believe no Set of Clergy, since the World became Christian, were ever so fully and generally convinced, as ours at present, of the Wickedness and Folly of making Attempts upon the Liberties of Mankind; so every observing Person must see, that this Danger is far from being an imminent, or an increasing one. Tragical Fears, it must be owned, were entertained, or pretended, at first, of the immoderate Power, which the Institution of these Schools would give us. But Time and Experience have thoroughly shewn, how very little Reason there was, on any such Account, either for Us to be fond of the Scheme, or the Laity jealous of it. The Enemies of Religion indeed will of course exclaim against the Greatness of our Influence, even whilst they despise us for the Smallness of it: but all others may surely see Cause to wish, that we had much more than we have, for good Purposes; and God forbid we should either desire or use any, to promote bad ones.

Next after the Duties, that we owe to our Maker, Christianity requires Obedience to our earthly Governors. And the Government with which we are now blessed, is so necessary for the

the Preservation of every Thing valuable to us, that all Persons of all Ranks should be habituated from their earliest Years to pray for it, and honour it, and live contentedly and thankfully under it: but those of low Rank particularly, *to be quiet, and do their own Business* *; *not exercising themselves in Matters too high for them* †. And if this Rule were either transgressed, or neglected, by the Directors or Teachers of our Charity Schools; it would be an insuperable Objection, so long as it continued, against encouraging such of them, as were thus fundamentally mismanaged. But indeed there hath been found, on repeated Enquiry, very good Reason to be satisfied, that the Faults of this Kind, which there might be once, never reached far, and have been long ago reformed. The Imputation therefore now would be grievously unjust: but there cannot be too strict a Caution to avoid all Appearance, not only of Disloyalty, but of every Party Regard of every Sort, in the whole Conduct of this Design: for much of its Support, and much of its Benefit, absolutely depends upon that one Thing.

Together with the Habits of Religion and Obedience to lawful Authority, these Children should be taught every other, that is useful and good. Their Moral Behaviour, a Point of vastly more Consequence than their Learning, should be diligently watched, both in the

* 1 Theff. iv. 11.

† Psal. cxxxj. 1.

School, and as much as possible out of it too; for which Purpose they are distinguished by a peculiar Dress: and their Parents should be earnestly warned, not to undo what their Instructors are doing. Ill-humour, Idleness, Indecency, Lying, Dishonesty, Profaneness, should be severely punished as often as they are observed: and if any of them corrupts the rest, or appears incorrigible himself, he should be immediately dismissed; and no false Tenderness, or mean-spirited Fear of disobliging, shewn, either by Teachers or Trustees. For maintaining the Credit of a School, is the sure Way of providing for the Support of it.

But particularly Humility should be instilled into them with singular Care. They should understand, that the lowest of those, whom their own Parents maintain, are for that very Reason Their Superiors: and that no Education, given as an Alms, can be a Ground for thinking highly of themselves. Their Usage in all Respects should be answerable to such Lessons. Cleanliness should be required of them, as far as ever their Employments allow it: but no extraordinary Provision should be made for it, nor the least Affectation of Nicety tolerated in either Sex. Their Cloaths should be no better, if so good, as they may hope to wear all the rest of their Lives; no Gaiety of Colour, no trifling Ornaments permitted; nor any Distinction between them and other Children, in which they can possibly be tempted to

to take Pleasure. If they are fed: their Food should be of the coarsest Sort, and not more than enough. If they are lodged: it should be in a manner, that is suitable to every Thing else. For, besides that Frugality is a most important Branch of Faithfulness in the Management of Charities, *it is good that they should bear the Yoke in their Youth**; be inured to the Treatment they must expect to receive: and wrong-judged Indulgence is the greatest Cruelty, that can be exercised towards them.

These Things, with others to be mentioned in their due Places, require much Diligence and Prudence, but, if possible, yet more Piety and Seriousness, in their Masters and Mistresses. If they have the Religion and Morals of their Children at Heart; they will find Means, with moderate Abilities, and few and artless Words, to give them a strong Tincture of both. But if they are lukewarm, and indifferent about the Matter; they will take little Pains, and be little minded; and nothing will be learnt, beyond a few Forms. Therefore in the Choice of them, not their Poverty, not the Recommendation of others, not our own Desire of serving them, should determine us: but merely their Fitness in these principal Points; for the Want of which, no Qualifications else, either natural or acquired, can ever compensate. Nor is choosing them discreetly by any

* Lam. iii. 27.

means sufficient, without superintending them continually afterwards; to examine what Progress is made under them; to excite or restrain, to praise or reprove, to support or dismiss them, as their Behaviour shall give Cause.

The Ministers of their several Parishes, I believe, do not fail, as Occasion offers, to countenance and assist them, in the religious Part of their Work especially. And would they bestow pretty frequently some kind Advice both upon Them and their Scholars; the good Consequences of it might reach further, than at the first View may appear. For if being taught their Duty makes these Children visibly better; other Persons, it may be hoped, will teach theirs also: but if it doth not, a hasty Conclusion will immediately be drawn by too many, that Religion doth Harm, or at least no Good.

One great Help, both to the Understanding and Practising of Religion, is, being able to Read. The Will of God is contained in his written Word: and why have we it in our Mother Tongue, but that all may be acquainted with it? We are often reminded, that Persons ought to judge for themselves: this is qualifying them for it. By the Means of pious Books, which that excellent *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, amongst their many other good Works, have provided for the

the Poor at very cheap Rates, they who can read, may have at all Times plain and familiar Instructions and Warnings, concerning each Part of their Duty, which they can review at every leisure Hour, dwell upon frequently, and fix in their Hearts. Many of them cannot attend on publick Service near so often as they would: reading will make them some Amends for this. Many grow insensibly negligent and thoughtless: reading will awaken them, *and strengthen the Things that remain, and are ready to die* *. They may indeed learn Wickedness from Books: but they may also learn full as much of it without them, by the Discourse which they hear every Day. And as good Books will be put into the Hands of these Children first, and teach them to abhor bad ones, and enable them to spend their Time agreeably and profitably alone, and bring them of consequence neither to need nor love dangerous Company: there can be no Doubt in their Case, on which Side the Benefit lies. But, besides religious Advantages, being able to read is of very great Use in all common Business: and scarce any Body hath Servants who are unable, but on one Occasion or another he finds considerable Inconveniencies from it: which is likewise the Case of Writing and Accounts. If indeed the poorer Sort were to be carried on so far in the two last Accomplishments, as to give them an Expectation of living by their Pen; it would

* Rev. iii. 2.

neither be Charity nor Prudence, but only distressing their Betters: amongst whom there are Multitudes of Persons thus qualified, ready at all Times for Employment. But some low Degree of Skill in this Way is already too common, either to make Them grow vain, or others murmur at them: and the more it approaches towards being universal, the smaller will be the Danger, and the greater the Benefit. In Country Villages indeed Writing may be less needful: and possibly may turn the Minds of the Children, or of their Parents for them, to some other Business than Husbandry. And therefore in such Places, it may perhaps be as well omitted; and I believe commonly is. But Reading must be serviceable in all Places. For however useless or hurtful to Persons in low Life the higher kind of Improvements may be; which is a Point most absurdly laboured in speaking against Charity Schools, where no such Things are taught: yet enabling the meanest People to carry on their Business more commodiously, and know their Duty more thoroughly, (the almost only Uses they will ever find for their Learning, if religiously educated) must surely have a Tendency to make them better, not worse. Ignorance and Stupidity, for which some, though unwilling to own it, have pleaded strenuously on this Occasion*, who on others accuse the Clergy as the great Promoters of them, are

* See *An Essay on Charity and Charity Schools*, pag. 304, 353, 370.

neither

neither Virtues, nor Friends to Virtue. On the contrary, most of those are abundantly *wise to do Evil, who to do Good have no Knowledge* *.

But still, as Work is what all these Children are destined for, it should be constantly had in view : and they should enter upon it whilst they are at School, if possible. It will make them useful at present, and both able and willing to work afterwards. It will put vain and idle Fancies out of their Heads ; and shew all the World, what is really aimed at. It will silence the principal Objection of Enemies, and remove the only Scruple of many true Friends. Accordingly, for some Years past, it hath been strongly insisted on by almost every Preacher upon the Subject ; warmly recommended by the worthy Society before-mentioned, who were the first Authors of this whole Design : and is, I doubt not, as earnestly desired by the Trustees, as it can be by the Publick ; whose Expectations are perfectly reasonable, excepting that they are a little too impatient.

Many right and excellent Undertakings are surrounded with vastly more Difficulties in the Execution, than immediately shew themselves. Trustees of Leisure and Activity to attempt such a Change, and of Skill and Interest enough to conduct it with Success, cannot be

* Jer. iv. 22.

had in an Instant for every School. Masters and Mistresses, very valuable in other Respects, may be unqualified in this, or too fully employed already to undertake more: adding supernumerary ones would be chargeable; and substituting better upon the Whole, may at present be impracticable. Doubts also may arise, on very just Grounds, what Work to try. Children are not fit for all Sorts: Manufactures proper for them are not ready at Hand every where: and setting up such on purpose, as would require any considerable Number of them, might be an Expence and a Risque very imprudent, on so uncertain a Fund as Charity. Besides, where Manufactures, which might be suitable to them, are established, the Workmen concerned in them can usually supply them very fully with their own Children: and heavy Complaints would be made, and many Contributions withdrawn, if others interfered to take the Bread out of their Mouths. It is said indeed, that Hands are wanting: but the Truth is, Employments are wanting in most Places, for these very young Creatures. Their Parents can make no Profit of them: else they certainly would, instead of sending them to School. The Parish Workhouses can few of them find any Work for the Children brought up in them, that turns to Account. And most unhappily, several of these Difficulties are the greatest in this City: where yet the Number of those, who want such a Provision, is and must be the largest.

However, till fuller Employment can be had for them, they are much better employed at School, than they would be else. How are other poor Children, whether maintained by their Parents or the publick Rates, spending their Time? Visibly, the most Part of them, neither in doing nor learning any one Thing that is good; but as much of the contrary, as ever they will and can: whilst these are kept, all of them in a considerable Degree, and such as are lodged at their Schools, entirely, from bad Company and bad Habits; from which their Parents have not Leisure to keep them, if they had always Inclination: they are accustomed to Application and Confinement, to Orderliness and Obedience; which will greatly prepare them for keeping close to Work hereafter: they are bred up in the Precepts of honest Industry: they have it upon their Minds from the first, that they are to get their Living that Way, and no other; and they are at last all put out to it.

Surely these Considerations must have the Effect, on all thinking Persons, of restraining their Censures, though by no means their Wishes. For it is both to be wished most ardently, and endeavoured most heartily, that every Obstacle to so excellent an Improvement, as that of introducing Work, may as soon as possible be every where overcome. This is not a Thing, which You, who are the Managers of these Charities, are driven into; and
excusing

excusing yourselves from it, as long as you can. You very well know, how important a Duty Industry is. You neither have, nor can have, any Inducement to discourage it in this Case; but all the Reason in the World to the contrary: and such, as absurdly clamour against you, would give a much better and very welcome Proof of their Zeal, if they would assist you, and share the Difficulties of the Attempt with you. But, without waiting for what is so little to be expected, there are some Schools, where the Children do work: why may not their Methods and Regulations be inquired into, and imitated by others? All the new erected Schools in *Ireland* join Labour with Instruction: probably something might be learnt from Them. Persons of Experience in various Kinds of Business in this great City, could surely, some of them, suggest what at least would deserve Trial. For the Girls especially one should think Employment might be found; and for most of them, I believe, is: complete Employment, where they live together; and where they do not, a good deal; in making, for Instance, their own and others coarse Cloaths. For as to fine Work of any Sort, it would be raising them above the Rank, for which they are intended; and might therefore be a worse and more lasting Mischief, than setting them to none. What either Sex can do, perhaps, will seldom turn to much Profit: but merely doing any Thing that tends to Usefulness, will be so great an

Advantage to them of itself, that some Danger, nay some Certainty of Loss by it at first, may very well be born for the sake of it. Or to prevent this, if any Person would hire, or even accept of their Service, for one Part of the Day or Week; the Remainder of it might be very sufficient for their other Instruction. Or whenever their Parents could keep them well employed, provided Assurance was given that they did so, That might be allowed: especially in the Country; where, according to the different Seasons of the Year, there are very busy and very leisure Times: and their Friends will be much the readier to send them at the latter, for being sure of their Assistance at the former. Their Learning, it must be acknowledged, will go on the more slowly for it, and their Teachers will have more Trouble with them: but, sooner or later, they will be taught as much as they need. And accordingly I see with great Pleasure, that the printed Rules of the Trustees have expressly provided, indeed for every Thing right and proper in the Management of their Trust, that can well be thought of, but particularly for Leave to be given in this Case. And were there exact Accounts procured from every Part of the Nation, what Rules are observed in the several Schools, with the Reasons of them: I am persuaded it would be a Means of vindicating them in most Things, as well as directing them better in some. I shall only add further under this Head, that where Labour
is

is not made Part of their Business, it will be advisable, to take the Children young and to keep them no longer, than till they have acquired some competent Degree of Knowledge and good Principles. For so they will have all that they can have: Work as soon as possible, and other Instruction in the meanwhile.

3. The Manner of *disposing* of them, when they come to be dismissed, is the next Point. And as all Education is for the sake of what shall follow it, the Trustees for them should interest themselves not a little in their future Course of Life; and, so far as they can, secure their Parents Consent when they are admitted, to their being placed out properly.

The Profane or Vicious, if any such be allowed to take them, will esteem them the less, not the more, for a considerable Part of what they have learnt; and do nothing to preserve the Impressions of it, perhaps a great deal to efface them: and then will throw the whole Blame of their ill Behaviour on the Management, under which they have been; and charge it with every Thing, that their own Imaginations can suggest. Good Persons therefore should always be sought out for them to go to. And they should be earnestly entreated, to keep them in the Way into which they have been put: especially to see, that they
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constantly attend on the Lord's Days Service, and make a proper Use of their religious Books. For some such should always be given them at their leaving the School, with a solemn Charge concerning the main Branches of their Conduct.

But not only the Persons, with whom they are placed, but the Employments, in which they are fixed, should be well considered. Great Numbers of them have been sent to Sea: and it is not the Fault of the Trustees, but of the Parents, that more are not defending or enriching their Country on board our Ships. Of the rest, those who are bred in this Town mostly become either Apprentices or Household Servants: and, it seems, Objections are made against each Method of disposing of them.

It hath been said, that they are put to retailing Shopkeepers, or other easy Employments, unsuitable to their original Condition; and that more Money is required, and given with them, than with other Children: all which, I am assured, is absolutely false in Fact. They are put, as they undoubtedly ought, to laborious working Trades, and no other: with many of them, no Money at all is given: with most of them, but forty Shillings: with some few, five Pounds: but more with none. And indeed it is evident, that the Friends of such an Education will dispose of them

them as cheap as they can; were it for this Reason only, that they may take in as many as they can.

Another Suggestion is, that they are put out to worthless Persons, in bad Circumstances, who take the Money, and then break. But neither of This do I find any Proof. However, though a groundless Assertion, it may furnish an useful Warning.

But at least, it is objected further, breeding so many of them to Trades occasions a Scarcity of Servants. Now even in this Town, not two thirds of the Boys, nor much above one fourth of the Girls, have been put Apprentices at all: and a great Part of these were probably no other than Household Servants, taken by Indenture for a Term of Years. What the Proportion hath been in the Country, doth not appear: but in all Likelihood it must have been very small. Or were it otherwise, Disproportions of this Nature will soon rectify themselves. Where Apprentices or Journey-men are not wanted, and other Servants are, these Children will of course be sent where the Demand is greatest: nor can the Trustees have either Inclination or Power to prevent it.

But whilst one of the Writers against our Charity Schools accuses them of lessening the Number of Servants*, the other charges them

* Essay, &c. p. 346.

with

with increasing it *. Possibly the Meaning may be, that they increase the Number of the upper and idler Sort, and lessen that of the lower and more laborious. Now as to this: the Boys, when they come from School, are plainly incapable of the higher Services: nor are many of them taken, even for Footmen. And yet, what Plenty soever there is of Livery Servants, there is so loud a Complaint of the Want of sober and honest ones, that I apprehend it would be no Inconvenience, but a general Advantage, if more of these Children were put into that Station, in serious and regular Families: for in others they would have little Chance of doing Good, and a great one of being ruined. Then for the Girls: as they certainly ought not either to be raised into the easier Places, or qualified for them; since it would hurt both others who have a better Claim to them, and the Publick; so I cannot find that they are: but that low Business, with low Wages of fifty Shillings or three Pounds a Year at most, is what universally falls to their Share, till by a Course of Diligence and Faithfulness they can better their Condition; which surely then should not be envied them.

It hath been alledged indeed, that Persons are unwilling to take them for Servants. But, as I know this to be very false in some Places; so I hope, where it is true, it cannot be often

* CATO, p. 241.

on account of their Education. Some may want Servants of more Strength, than these young People can have at first: some may dislike taking so unexperienced ones; some may think it beneath them, to have such mean Creatures in their Houses: and some may be unjustly prejudiced against them in other Respects, partly by false Representations, and partly also by mistaken Appearances. For there is a superficial Pertness, very apt to spring up, at that Time of Life, amongst Numbers bred together: which ought to be, and I hope is, carefully kept under; and yet may now and then give a little Offence. Besides, all who are taught any Thing valuable, are doubtless in some Danger of esteeming themselves rather too highly upon it. But this can never be a Reason, why they should be taught nothing valuable. And such trifling Faults are so easily conquered in Children, and will be so amply recompensed by substantial good Qualities, that prudent Persons will certainly think them worth trying at least. They will find them taught to their Hands those good Principles, which else they must think it their own Duty to teach them, with no small Pains. And they will find them restrained, as much as they could be, from the Vices, of which they would with them not to be guilty, and in which others of their Rank are too commonly indulged. Still not all, it must be owned, prove well, either under this Sort of Management, or any other. Such as
do,

do, be they ever so many, have little or nothing said of them: it is only what ought to be expected. Such as do not, occasion abundance of Talk: and all the Errors, into which they run in spite of their Education, are pretended to flow from it. But so far as Enquiry hath hitherto been made, Multitudes have proved excellently good; few in Proportion remarkably bad; scarce any, perhaps none, have been convicted of Capital Crimes, excepting those who had been expelled as incurable. And if more particular Enquiries were carried on in every School, as they are in some, concerning the Behaviour of each Child, that hath been put out either to Service or Apprenticeship: where they behave ill, it might give a good Insight into the Cause, and shew how to remove it: but I am persuaded, from what I have experienced, it would be generally found, that they behave well. To which perhaps it might add no despicable Incitement, if some little Reward were given to every one, who at the End of so many Years had deserved a good Character. And I am told, there is a Legacy left to one School, appropriated to this Purpose.

But the chief Objection with many Persons is, that this Method of Education takes off great Numbers from Husbandry. And it must be allowed, that most of those, who are bred up by Charity in or near these two Cities, are fixed in or near them afterwards. But is there

the least Likelihood, that any of them would else have gone to Country Business? Do any of the other Children of the Poor go to it from hence? Did any of them before these Schools were erected? None at all. The Governors of one * School have for some Years advertised, that they were desirous of sending their Children to Husbandry on very reasonable Terms: and had they met with Encouragement, which they have not, others would have followed their Example. The Clergy have frequently in their Sermons exhorted to this Way of disposing of them. The more than once mentioned *Society* have advised it continually for a long Time. And could any Person suggest the Means to so good an End, the Trustees have given publick Assurance, that they would rejoice in it most sincerely. In the mean while, they do all that they have the Power of doing: they place them in such Employments, as they must have followed otherwise, if they followed any. For indeed many of them would only have been brought up to beg or steal: few would have been employed so soon; scarce any so well. As to the Children in Country Schools, their Number is so small, considering the Extent through which they are dispersed, that no general Inconvenience could as yet be sensibly perceived from it, even though a great Part of them were put out improperly. But I apprehend they are not. They are none of them removed hither;

* That of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

nor apter than others, so far as I can hear, to come of their own Accord. Where Manufactures flourish, they are as useful in Them, as they could be in any Thing else: where there are none, or decaying ones only, they will go to Husbandry of course.

It is said indeed, that Hands are greatly wanted for Country Work. And at particular Seasons they are: but whether so very much upon the Whole, as some think, may for several Reasons be doubted. The Wages of Country Servants have certainly been much raised: but so have all Wages: perhaps nearly in the same Proportion. And as the Quantity of our Wealth, real or nominal, hath increased considerably within the last half Century; the Prices of the Things, for which we exchange it, and of Labour amongst other Things, must have increased by Degrees, even had Labourers of each Kind been as numerous as ever: whereas probably they are much diminished. But then the Diminution proceeds, not from these Schools, but from other Causes of a very different Nature *. Vast Multitudes of Men have been employed and lost in our

* The Author of the *Essay*, &c. seems to be sensible of this, when he says, p. 351. that "if a thousand Faults were to concur, before the Inconveniencies we labour under could be produced, yet no Man can doubt, but Charity Schools are necessary, or at least more likely to increase than redress our Complaints." This indeed is saying a great deal too much. But as others have said much more, there is no Question but he would also; unless he had felt that he could not, consistently with Truth or Modesty.

Armies and Fleets. These two great Cities are increased beyond Measure, and exhaust the rest of the Nation. The Number of unnecessary and useless Servants is multiplied excessively : who corrupt one another here, and their poor Neighbours when they go into the Country, and teach them a Fondness for the Pleasures and Ease of the Town. Hither therefore they flock ; set up for such Places and such Wages as they like, and behave as they think fit : support themselves by Combinations, when out of Place, as long as they can ; and at last will take any Courses, rather than wise ones. But indeed Luxury and Dissoluteness are spread with Irreligion through our People in general, from the Highest to the Lowest : they must all both appear and fare better than their Predecessors in the same Stations : they live, too many of them, in wicked and expensive Lewdness, instead of honest Matrimony ; by this Vice, and the dreadfully pernicious one, commonly joined with it, of drinking Spirituous Liquors, they enfeeble and destroy themselves early, and produce no Increase. These are the real Causes of the Complaint : and do they owe their Rise to Charity Schools ? So far from it, that in Truth there is double Occasion for such Schools, in Town and Country both, to preserve, if it may be, some Part of our Poor from this dreadful Plague, that rages so fatally amongst them.

But

But it is objected in the last Place ; If this Method of Education hath so excellent a Tendency, how comes it to pass, that instead of that mighty Reformation amongst the common People, which the earlier Sermons on this Occasion promised from it, they are thus confessedly grown worse under the Use of it, than they were before ? Now the Answer is very easy. No Provision of any Sort for the Benefit of Mankind ever did, or probably ever will, come up to the Expectations and Hopes, which good Persons, laudably zealous for it, were willing to entertain. Yet this doth not prove all such Provisions to be useless or wrong. Besides, it could not well be either foreseen or suspected, forty Years ago, how entirely Magistrates and Heads of Families would neglect the Religion and Morals of all under their Care, and with what enthusiastick Vehemence others would set themselves to extirpate Seriousness and Order out of the World. No Wonder, if such Remissness and such Licentiousness have done more Harm, than Charity Schools have done Good. The Number educated in them, is a very small Part of the Poor of the Nation : and the Wickedness of the rest corrupts too many of these. Still the right Principles, taught them, often preserve them, and often bring them back, when nothing else would. And if this too frequently proves otherwise, it only shews the Proneness of our Nature to Sin, and the Necessity of our best Care. Had none been taken, bad as we are, we had been

much worse; and had more been taken, we might have been much better. But to charge the Degeneracy of a People on the very Thing, that doth so much to prevent it; and make it the Reason of their being Wicked, that some of them are trained up to be Pious and Virtuous; is a Degree of Absurdity, which one scarce knows how to excuse from wilful Misrepresentation.

III. I now proceed, as I am very sensible it is high Time, to consider briefly, in the *third* Place, What Course we are to take, if neither prudent Management, nor rational Defences of the *good* Work that we are engaged in, can altogether prevent its *being evil spoken of*: which, though very hard, hath been hitherto, and we must expect will be, the Case.

Some will speak ill of it from Hatred, others from Indifference, to Religion and Virtue. For though in Reason both Unbelievers and immoral Persons ought to wish, that most others, especially the Poor, might be sober and honest, and for that Purpose religious; and therefore ought to encourage those of them who are so, and such Methods as would make the rest of them so: yet Scripture * hath taught us to look for the contrary from them, and in Experience we find it. They would even seem to act from a kind of Principle in

* Amos v. 10. John xv. 19.—xvii. 14. 1 John iii. 12.

this Matter : and Persons, who have no Fear in the least of Society being hurt by Profaneness and Profligateness, affect prodigious Fears of its being hurt by Charity Schools : do nothing, say nothing, against other Evils ; join in them, plead for them ; but this one Danger awakens all their Publick Spirit : and they are as clear, that the Education of these poor Children is the Cause of almost every Thing they dislike, as the Heathen *Romans* were, that all the Calamities which beset their Empire, proceeded from the Growth of Christianity. Some again, without going so great Lengths, will not fail however to condemn what they must else contribute to support. Others are so unhappily attentive to Party Considerations or Personal Prejudices, that if a Design, ever so valuable, comes from a wrong Quarter, instead of being ambitious to share in the Merit and the Honour of it, they set themselves immediately to depreciate it, and suggest mischievous Intentions in it. And every one of these Motives will induce some to invent, and many more to magnify Faults : to dress out Facts with Circumstances, that entirely alter the Nature of them ; and talk vehemently about Things, which have been corrected long ago, as if they happened lately, and the same ill Management subsisted still. No Persons indeed should be charged with speaking or acting from worse Motives, than they do : for it is both injuring and exasperating them.

But

But every Person ought conscientiously to examine, what his own Motives are; and prudently to consider, what those of others may be; and neither be influenced by their Opinions, nor their Assertions, more than they deserve. For not only false, but incredible and ridiculous Stories about these Schools, have been confidently averred, and incautiously believed.

Nor are bad People only, but very good ones sometimes, grievously inclined to Partialities and hard Censures: too negligent of enquiring, too hasty in giving Credit. A small, or but imagined Failure, in the Scheme, in the Execution, in the Success, of a most useful Undertaking, shall cool their Friendship, or provoke their Enmity to it: and they strangely forget, that a few Errors and Defects are no Reason for abandoning valuable Designs, but only for amending them; and that the Good arising from them, even if Amendments cannot be procured, may be vastly greater than the Harm. It is very afflicting, when Persons, who mean well to Religion, will notwithstanding take Part thus with such as mean ill to it; and abet those, who have no other View than to destroy, instead of favouring the Endeavours that are used to reform and improve. The Watchfulness of our worthy Diocesan over the Management of this Charity, hath kept equal Pace with the Malice of
of

of its forwardest Adversaries*. And your Care, who are Trustees, hath been applied without Intermission to prevent or remedy, what others have only busied themselves to rail at. Yet the faithful Diligence shewn on the one Side, hath been suspected and reproached: and the unrighteous Accusations brought on the other, applauded and propagated.

But, unjust as this Treatment is, you must resolve to bear it with all possible Temper and Composedness. For Persons, who judge and behave very wrong in relation to these Schools, may yet be intitled to great Regard on other Accounts. And where Prejudice and a Kind of Fashion run against any Thing, as they do amongst too many in the present Case; angry Complaints, however well grounded, will only be despised, or excite a Return of more Anger: whereas mild Representations will at least mollify those, whom they cannot bring over. Objections therefore, and even Invectives, should be patiently heard: and Answers, though sufficiently given already, repeated with Calmness. If real Faults are found, they should be acknowledged: if proper Alterations are demanded, they should be made. For though Innovations, which appear very plausible, may be found, when examined, very dangerous; and therefore Love of Change is

* See the *Directions* given by the Lord Bishop of London to the Masters and Mistresses of Charity Schools, in the Chapter-House of St. Paul's, Nov. 14, 1724.

by no means to be encouraged : yet Aversion to it may be carried to an Extreme also ; and Persons may both intend very well, and in most Things do very well, and yet material Points may have been either overlooked by them at first, or gradually forgotten afterwards. Each of you singly therefore should always be solicitous to learn, both from Friends and Enemies, what will be conducive to your Design : and that excellent Rule, which you have so wisely established and so long observed, of stated Meetings to consult together for the better Conduct of it, should be strictly kept up ; and diligently applied, to propose modestly, and promote unanimously, whatever may contribute either to perfect or recommend it. Only you will remember, that the former should be your chief Concern : and that the Reality, not the Name, of a Christian and useful Education, is the Thing, which you are to have at Heart.

Such then is your Duty : and if you are conscious of having taken due Pains to perform it, let who will censure or ridicule you, let who will grow cool or leave you, go on with Cheerfulness, and persevere to the End. For, provided it be *a Zeal according to Knowledge* *, *it is good to be always zealously affected in a good Thing* †, and not to suffer our Love to wax cold, because Iniquity abounds ‡. Deserting such a Work, after once engaging in it,

* Rom. x. 2.

† Gal. iv. 18.

‡ Matth. xxiv. 12.

not only withdraws Countenance from it, but casts an Imputation upon it. *Be not therefore overcome of Evil, but, in this Sense as well as others, overcome Evil with Good* *. You have the Comfort of doing much Service to God and your Fellow-creatures : you have the Consciousness of having endeavoured to do more. You deserve from all Persons, and you will receive from all considerate Persons, great Honour : and were it less, you would only be the surer, that you act from a right Principle, and shall obtain a large Reward ; not only for all you have designed, but all you have born, as you ought ; whether it be Reproach, or whether it be Disappointment. But then let your whole Lives be suitable to this Part : be good Christians in every Respect yourselves, whilst you profess to make others such : else you will discredit your Undertaking before Men, and lose your Recompence from God. For though *Charity shall cover the Multitude of Sins* † : yet this one Work is only a small Branch of that extensive Virtue ; and were it the Whole, no wilful Transgressions, of which you do not so repent, as to forsake them, shall ever be hid by it.

But all, that the Directors of this Charity can do, will be much in vain, unless you, the Masters and Mistresses of the several Schools, perform your Share as you ought, in every Particular, which you can either suggest to your-

* Rom. xii. 21.

† 1 Pet. iv. 8.

selves,

selves, or learn from others: unless you go through your whole Work with Diligence and Discretion, with Patience and Vigilance, with Impartiality and Disinterestedness; with Defe-
rence and Respect to those who employ you, with Authority and yet Mildness towards those, over whom you are placed; with a tender Con-
cern for their temporal and eternal Happiness, and a fearless Resolution to oppose and over-
come every Hindrance to either. The best Designs, without a suitable Execution of them, are likely to end in nothing, or worse. Think then with yourselves: will you occasion all this Charity, and all these Objects of it, to be utterly lost by your Fault? Or will you be the Authors of more Good to Them, and more Blessedness to your own Souls, than any Per-
sons of your Degree possibly can in any other Way? By your Endeavours and your Prayers you have the latter in your Power: and God incline your Hearts to it! The Impressions, that can be made from this Place at present on your poor Children, can be but small, or at best short-lived. To you therefore I leave it, to give them the deepest Sense that you are able, of the unspeakable Privilege of their Education, the dreadful Guilt of making a bad Use of it, the indispensable Duty of doing Justice and Credit every Way to the Schools, to which they belong: and of recompensing hereafter, as God shall enable them, the Be-
nefit which they receive.

But

But I must not even yet conclude, till I have in one Word more reminded you all, who are here assembled, that without continual Help this excellent Undertaking cannot be supported; and that almost every one is capable of giving it Help, more or less, in some Way or another. They who have the Burthen of conducting it as Trustees, all afford it the Assistance of their Purfes, as well as their Pains and Advice. And I hope such of you, as are proper, will be ready, when Occasion shall require, to share in the same Trust. For nothing is more absolutely necessary to such a Charity, than a constant Succession of wise, and good, and reputable Managers. But if you cannot serve it this Way, serve it however in the much easier Way, of a cheerful Liberality. Its being a *good Thing evil spoken of*, obliges You, who are convinced it is unjustly so spoken of, both to patronize it more earnestly, and contribute to it more bountifully. The truest Objects of Compassion upon Earth, are young Persons left, uninstructed and unrestrained, to the Dangers of a corrupted Nature and a vicious World. And such, without the timely Interposition of a Christian Spirit, would these have been, whose Appearance now, not only gives your Eyes the Pleasure of a beautiful and affecting Spectacle, but your Hearts the Joy of beholding at once, so many Thousands of young Candidates for Usefulness in this World, and endless Felicity in the next, as perhaps no Nation under the Sun besides hath
ever

ever seen together. Let us comfort ourselves in the Prospect, and oppose it to the very gloomy ones, that we have around us. Amongst the Poor our Religion first had its Rise: and there at least it may yet maintain its Ground, till it *shall again take Root downward, and bear Fruit upward* *, amongst other Ranks of Men. We are following the original Plan of the Divine Wisdom, in making Provision for revealing *those Things to Babes*, which *the Wise and Prudent* in their own Eyes have *hid from themselves* †. And may God, *out of the Mouths of these Babes and Sucklings* ‡, *ordain and perfect Praise* to his holy Name, and *Strength* to the Kingdom of his ever-blessed Son!

* Isai. xxxvii. 31.
Matth. xxi. 16.

† Matth. xi. 25.

‡ Psal. viii. 2.

S E R M O N VIII.

Preached in the Parish-Church of
St. James, Westminster, March 11,
1749-50, on Occasion of the Earth-
quake, March 8.

PSALM ii. 11.

*Serve the Lord with Fear: and rejoice unto
him with Reverence.*

THE Passion of Fear is an extremely necessary one for all Creatures, whose Good or Evil depends on their Behaviour: for it prompts them instantly to avoid whatever would harm them: and accordingly God hath given it a strong and deep Root in human Nature. But as our Frame is disordered throughout, we are liable, in this Respect, as well as many more, now to exceed, now to be deficient: and fearing too little, on some Occasions, is the Cause of our fearing, on others, much more, than else we should need. Religion, if we permit it, will regulate all our inward Feelings to our present and eternal Advantage: and is particularly serviceable, not only in exciting, but directing, and moderating This. Without Religion, there may be end-
less

less Alarms. Were not the World governed by infinite Justice and Goodness; every Person, that would, might, in Multitudes of Cases, do any Hurt to others with Impunity: and all Mischief of all Kinds befall us, however innocent, singly or jointly, through the whole Course of Life, unalleviated by a Prospect of Recompense after Death. Nay indeed, as nothing hinders, but that, if it were possible for us to exist without God here, it might be possible hereafter too: there could be no Certainty, that Death itself would end our Sufferings, or even would not increase them. But the Knowledge of a gracious and wise Providence entirely secures us, if we believe it as we ought, not only against all Imaginations of inexorable Fate and blind Chance, but all real Detriment from the worst Efforts of Men or Devils. For *if God be for us, who can be against us* *? It is very true, Religion banishes these Objects of Apprehension by substituting in their Room another, unspeakably more formidable than them all. *I say unto you, my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body; and after that, have no more, that they can do. But I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear. Fear Him, which after he hath killed, hath Power to cast into Hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear Him* †. And did not Reason afford us Hope; and Scripture, Assurance, of his accepting and rewarding us, on most equitable Terms: our Condition under the Divine

* Rom. viii. 31.

† Luke xii. 4, 5.

Government would be surrounded with incomparably greater Terrors, than any other possibly could. But since we know the Means of obtaining his Favour, in this Life and the next: if we will but use them conscientiously, the Awe, which we cannot but feel, of an Almighty Arm, will be sweetly mixed with faithful Trust and thankful Love: and those Things, which give others the most grievous Disturbance, will not need to give Us the least. *Fear ye not their Fear, neither be afraid: but sanctify the Lord of Hosts, and let Him be your Fear, and let Him be your Dread: and He shall be a Sanctuary**. First therefore learn to *serve the Lord with Fear*: and then you will be intitled to *rejoice unto him with Reverence*.

The Word of God, far from encouraging groundless and superstitious Horrors, cautions against them strongly. In all Ages and Nations, Men have been terrified with Eclipses of the Sun and Moon: in many, with Conjunctions, Oppositions and Aspects of the Stars, and other celestial Appearances: Things altogether harmless. Therefore such Frights the Prophet expressly condemns. *Thus saith the Lord: Learn not the Way of the Heathen, and be not dismayed at the Signs of Heaven, because the Heathen are dismayed at them: for the Customs of the People are vain†*. But whatsoever Things are real Instruments of our

* Is. viii. 12, 13, 14.

† Jer. x. 2, 3.

Maker's Will, we are to consider as such; and respect all that is wrought by them, as proceeding from his Appointment. Were we sure of living ever so long on Earth; we are absolutely in his Hands all the Time we live; and ought to be deeply sensible, that our Happiness or Misery, even here, depends continually upon him. But he hath passed a Sentence of Death on us all, to be executed, at furthest in a few Years: and this furnishes a new Motive to Seriousness of Heart, which we should be recollecting daily and hourly. But instead of that, we contrive all possible Means never to think of it; and we succeed too well. Therefore to awaken us from this Lethargy, he hath ordained besides, that the whole of Life shall be full of Diseases and Accidents, to cut it short on a Sudden, often when there was least Cause to expect them: and here is a more pressing Call to *consider our latter End* *. But however surprising each of these may be, when it happens very near us; yet, as one or another of them happens pretty frequently; for that very Reason, though they ought to affect us the more, they scarce affect us at all. Therefore he also brings on, from Time to Time, the less common, and more widely destructive Events, of Wars and Pestilences. Of the former we have for several Years, not long past, had heavy Experience. And what we see and hear to this Day of the latter amongst our Cattle, tells us, one should

* Deut. xxxii. 29,

think, in a very interesting Manner, to what we are subject ourselves. But if all these Things fail of the good Effects, which he proposes by them, as it is notorious they do with Us most lamentably : he hath in reserve more alarming Methods of Admonition still : one in particular, by which he shakes whole Cities, whole Countries and Nations, sometimes to the Extent of many hundred Leagues at once, notwithstanding the Intervention of large and deep Seas ; and hath frequently taken away the Lives of thousands in a Moment, by a Ruin, which no Wisdom can foresee, no Caution prevent, no Strength withstand, no Art evade.

You have often read and heard of such Threatnings and Devastations elsewhere : but did not look on them, as having the least Relation to yourselves. Possibly some of you imagined, that this Part of the World was exempt from them. But indeed your Ancestors have felt them, many Times recorded in History, probably many more. However, That, you might think, was long ago ; and would be long enough, before it happened again. Yet not a few Persons, now alive, remember one Earthquake in this City : and that you may not dream of being safer than they, Providence hath taken Care, that You shall feel another. Still, when you had escaped one Shock, perhaps you thought the Danger was over. Therefore you have felt a stronger.

And which of you can be sure, that this will prove the last ?

But you will say, Neither these nor the former have done any Harm : and therefore why should we fear it from future ones ? But let me tell you, Earthquakes have done Harm in this Kingdom, in this Town : overturned many private Houses, many Churches, not without the Loss of many Lives. But if that were otherwise, have we any Reason to doubt, but the Causes of Earthquakes are the same here, as in other Places ? Why then may not the Effects be the same in our Days, though formerly they have been less ? Who can look into the Bowels of the Earth and assign a Reason ? Place the Cause, if you will, contrary, I think, to plain Evidence, not in the Earth, but the Air, what will you gain by it ? Would not a very little more Force, nay a few Moments longer Continuance of the same Force, that shook our Houses the other Morning, have buried many or most of us under them, whencesoever it came ? And if it had, let us ask ourselves, were we in due Readiness to have appeared before God ?

No longer than fifty-seven Years ago, when the last Earthquake before these was felt here ; within a few Months of the same Time, near 2000 Persons were destroyed in a Moment by one at *Jamaica* ; and near 100,000 by another in *Sicily*. Not three Years and a half ago,
in

in *Lima*, the principal City of *Peru*, containing 60,000 Inhabitants, 5,000 perished by an Earthquake in less than three Minutes, and but twenty-five Houses were left standing. At the Sea-port of *Callao*, belonging to it, not one Building, not one Ship escaped, and only 100 Inhabitants out of 7,000 : nor were there fewer, than sixty Shocks more, in thirty Days. Indeed at the same Place, they return generally about once a Month, and with great Violence once in a few Years. Ought the Consideration of these Things to have no Effect upon us ? Allowing them not to prove, that we ever shall be in so dreadful a Situation : yet they prove, that, for ought we know, we may : they shew, in a strong Light, the Terrors of Divine Power ; and should remind us of all the other Reasons, that we have, to stand in Awe of it, both in this World and a future one : of which we ought to think without such Warnings ; but if we can be thoughtless in the Midst of them, we are void of all Excuse. By taking Pains for it, we may bring ourselves to imagine the Sufferings of others, no Concern of ours : and our own Danger, a very slight one. But do we resolve then, that nothing shall move us, but what will destroy us ? That we will not repent, unless we are attacked by a Judgment, that will leave Multitudes of us no Time to repent ? You have, in the Revelation of *St. John*, this prophetick Description : *And the same Hour there was a great Earthquake, and the tenth*

Part of the City fell; and in the Earthquake were slain of Men, seven thousand: and the Remnant were affrighted, and gave Glory to the God of Heaven *. Had it not been much better, that all should have been preserved, by giving Glory to God in Time? And who can be certain, in such a Case, that he may not be one amongst those, who perish, however few?

But suppose we could be assured, that this Land of ours would for ever be exempted from the severe Visitations, which so many others have long undergone, do still, and are likely to undergo: who hath exempted us? *Who hath made us to differ* †? Do we owe Him nothing on that Account; that *the Lot is fallen unto us in so fair a Ground, that we have so goodly a Heritage* ‡? And ought such mild Admonitions from God, as we have lately received, of what he could do, and doth not, to pass by us unregarded? Do we *despise the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance*, instead of *knowing, that it leads us to Repentance* ||? The Countries, that suffer most, have no Right to complain. He hath doubtless wise, though unsearchable Reasons, for subjecting them to the Calamities, from which he hath preserved others: and he will sufficiently distinguish hereafter the Good and the Bad, whom at any Time he involves in a com-

* Rev. xi. 13.

† 1 Cor. iv. 7.

‡ Ps. xvi. 7.

|| Rom. ii. 4.

mon Calamity here. Yet surely we are glad, every one of us, that we are not in their Condition: and whatever we have Cause to be glad of, we have Cause to be thankful for it, to the Author of all Good.

But perhaps you will say: "These Things are natural: and therefore what Foundation is there for considering them in a religious Light?" But supposing they are, which is more than we know, is not the whole Frame of Things, of our Bodies and our Souls, natural? And are we therefore to consider none of them in a religious Light? We are to consider them all so. Life and Death are natural. Judgment, Heaven and Hell, are just as natural. For what is Nature? The Order established by a wise and holy God. And must he not design, that we should learn from every Part of it, especially the most striking Parts, to honour him, and *fear before the Lord**? He foresaw from the Beginning, that constant and uniform Impressions on our Minds would be apt to grow faint and languid. Therefore he interwove, in his original Scheme, Incidents, that should alarm us, from Time to Time. Is that Provision of His a Reason, why we should not be alarmed?

Terror alone indeed is of no Use. And God forbid, that I should endeavour to raise it in any of you, were nothing better likely to fol-

* Haggai i. 12.

low. But, generally speaking, it is the first, the strongest Motive to Reformation. And though Dread of future Punishments ought to have, that of present often hath, the most powerful Influence in exciting Sentiments of Piety, and thence of Virtue; which are both of them practised afterwards from more ingenuous Principles. *With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night; yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness**. And this particular Judgment, of which we have had, in Comparison, so gentle an Intimation, appears from Scripture to have been peculiarly intended and employed, through successive Generations, to give Mankind a Sense of Reverence and Duty towards Him, *who removeth the Mountains, and overturneth them in his Anger; who shaketh the Earth out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof tremble†*. When the Law was delivered at Mount Sinai, *the whole Mountain, we read, quaked greatly‡*. When Corah and his Company rebelled against the Lord; *the Ground that was under them clave asunder, the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up: they went down alive into the Pit; and the Earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the Congregation||*. In the Days of Saul, when the Lord avenged Israel of the Philistines, *there was a trembling*

* Is. xxvi. 9. † Job ix. 5, 6. ‡ Exod. xix. 18.
 || Numb. xvi. 31, 32, 33.

in the Field; and the Earth quaked; it was a Trembling of God *. When he delivered David from the Hand of his Enemies, the very Foundations of the Hills shook and were removed, because he was wroth †. When his own People provoked him to Displeasure, his Threatning in *Isaiah* is: *Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with Thunder, and with Earthquakes, and great Noise, with Storm and Tempest ‡*. Sometimes indeed Expressions, like these, may signify only Disorders and Commotions in Kingdoms and States, such as we experienced not many Years ago, and had Reason to pray with the Psalmist: *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased: O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the Earth to tremble: heal the Breaches thereof, for it shaketh ||*. But there was in *Isaiah's* Age a literal Earthquake, so considerable, that we find it served afterwards, both for a Date, to mark Time §, and, even at the Distance of two hundred Years, for a proverbial Description of Terror: *Ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the Earthquake, in the Days of Uzziab, King of Judah ***. Again, *Jeremiah* sets forth the Wickedness of the Jewish Nation, too like our own, and its Consequences, thus: *My People is foolish, they have not known me: they are wise to do Evil, but to do Good they have no Knowledge. I beheld the Mountains, and lo, they trembled; and*

* 1 Sam. xiv. 15.
|| Ps. lx. 1, 2.

† Ps. xviii. 7.
§ Amos i. 1.

‡ Is. xxix. 6.
** Zech. xiv. 5.
all

all the Hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no Man: the fruitful Place was a Wilderness, and all the Cities thereof were broken down at the Presence of the Lord, and by his fierce Anger *. Once more, God is introduced in the Prophet Ezekiel, using these Words: *In my Jealousy, and the Fire of my Wrath, have I spoken: surely in that Day there shall be a great Shaking in the Land of Israel: so that the Fishes of the Sea, the Fowls of the Heaven, the Beasts of the Field, and all the Men that are upon the Face of the Earth, shall shake at my Presence: and the Mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep Places fall, and every Wall shall fall to the Ground: thus will I magnify myself in the Eyes of many Nations; and they shall know, that I am the Lord* †.

Nor doth the Old Testament only give us these awful Ideas; but in the New, no less than three of the four Evangelists record our Saviour to have foretold, that, before his coming to Judgment, *Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom, and great Earthquakes shall be in divers Places, and Famines and Pestilences; and fearful Sights and great Signs shall there be from Heaven: all these are the Beginning of Sorrows* ‡. Now most of these, it must be owned, we have seen and felt. Yet I am far from concluding,

* Jer. iv. 22—26.

† Ezek. xxxviii. 19, 20, 23.

‡ Matth. xxiv. 7, 8. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xxi. 11.

and

and would counsel others not to be rash in concluding, any thing in relation to *the Times and Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power* *. But we are authorised to conclude, that such Visitations may be Tokens of wonderful Changes, in the natural, in the civil World; as indeed the Book of *Revelation* affords Ground to believe, that, sooner or later, they will: describing many grand Periods of Time, as introduced by these Fore-runners. Or however that be, we cannot err in concluding, that a God so great in Counsel and mighty in Work, must have his Eyes open on all the Ways of the Sons of Men, to give every one according to the Fruit of his Doings †. Whether at the present Time, whether in the present Life, appears not yet. And I would not terrify the worst Sinner among you, beyond Reason. Possibly we may feel no more of these Shocks. Possibly no Damage may attend them, if we do. But is Possibility, is Probability, in a Matter so totally out of Sight, firm Ground enough for you to risque your Souls upon? Even were it Certainty, hath God no other Means, than Earthquakes, to deal with Men as they deserve? Or is not every Part of the Creation ready to execute his Vengeance, whenever he bids it? Surely then you should have immediate Recourse to the Scripture Remedy, the only infallible one, against this and all Dangers, *stand in Awe, and sin not* ‡.

* Acts i. 7.

† Jer. xxxii. 19.

‡ Ps. iv. 4.

But

But perhaps you will object: "We are not
 " convinced that our Danger, be there ever
 " so much, proceeds from Sin. We are not
 " greater Sinners, than others: they that suf-
 " fer most by sudden Strokes, are not greater:
 " our Saviour hath told us, that they are
 " not *." But he said it of some only, not
 of all: and to what End did he say it of those?
 To make Men thoughtless and careless about
 themselves? No: entirely to make them cha-
 ritable in their Judgments about their Bre-
 thren. On what Foundation then do we of
 this Nation, this City, say, we are not worse
 than others? I am sensible, the Countries
 around us are very wicked. And it might be
 as fruitless, as it would be a melancholy Em-
 ployment, to examine, which are worse, we
 or they. Yet surely our Luxury and Extrava-
 gance, our Debauchery and Intemperance,
 our Madness for Pleasure from the Highest to
 the Lowest, our Selfishness and profligate Cor-
 ruption, our uncharitable Divisions, alas, our
 many other Sins that might be named, are not
 easily paralleled any where else. But supposing
 them to equal us in this horrid Competition:
 do they sin as openly, as avowedly as we,
glorying in their Shame †? Are they unpunish-
 ed, unrestrained, I had almost said indulged,
 as here? I conceive not. Or if they were as
 boldly and securely vicious in common Life:
 are they as regardless too of Him that made
 them? I believe no one Nation in the Christian

* Luke xiii. 2, &c.

† Phil. iii. 19.

World is, or ever was. Many Individuals may : but is the Generality, the Bulk of High and Low, so profane any where ; so contemptuously negligent of God, and in Consequence of that, so utterly destitute of all Prospect and all Principle of Amendment ? Or admitting even this : yet, in many other Nations, ill-grounded, superstitious, unworthy Opinions make up a considerable Part of their religious Belief : on which Account, it is more excusable, if some are tempted to despise the whole ; while others rely on empty Forms, or impious Observances, even to appease God on such Occasions, as the present. But You have a rational and moral Religion, with plain Instructions in it, and home Exhortations to live suitably to it, pressed upon you continually : and you *love Darknes rather than Light, because your Deeds are evil**. Nay, more than a few, not content to disobey it, ridicule it, inveigh against it, teach others to do so too : some, in mere wanton Gaiety ; others, with a Zeal quite enthusiastick. And for what End ? Have they a System of Doctrines and Precepts to set up, more honourable to the Supreme Being, more beneficial to human Society, better fitted to enlighten the Understanding, to dignify the Heart ? And is it to establish this, that they depreciate Christianity ? No : however highly and extravagantly they some of them, now and then, affect to talk of natural Religion : yet in Fact, none of

* John iv. 19.

them, so far as appears, either practise or stately profess it : but they live *without God, and die without Hope* *. Nor have we only our Means of Knowledge, but our Liberty, our Plenty, our numberless Mercies of every Kind, to aggravate our Transgressions. And still can we plead, that we are no worse than others ? Or if we could, what Comfort is there in that, if we are bad enough to deserve God's Indignation ; and growing yearly and daily to deserve a higher Degree of it ; abounding more and more in our old Vices, and adding new and unnatural ones to them ? Doth our Saviour say, that such, as can flatter themselves they are not greater Sinners than others, need not be afraid ? Quite the contrary, he saith, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish* †. And, I beg you observe, the general Terror of that Saying hath now been particularly pointed towards this City, the Headquarters and Example of Wickedness to the whole Island. This very Place hath been the Center, both of the first and the second Shock : and they have extended but few Miles round it. Doth not that look very like an especial Denunciation against us ? And should it not incline us to take the Prophet's Direction : *The Voice of the Lord crieth unto the City : and the Man of Wisdom shall see thy Name : bear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it* ‡.

* Eph. ii. 12.

† Luke xiii. 3.

‡ Mic. vi. 9.

Some,

Some, I am told, have resolved to fly away from hence upon it: and then imagine, they shall be out of all Hazard. But do you hope to fly from God? Fly from your Iniquities to God, if you would be safe. Other Precautions will avail you little. You had one Alarm a Month ago. Have you left off a Sin or a Folly since; done a Deed of Charity, or made a hearty Prayer the more for it? The publick Appearance of Things, I am sure, hath been almost in all Respects the same: and in very many, such as it ought by no Means to be. You have now had a second and more terrifying Admonition. Hath even that brought you to any determinate good Resolutions? If not, what do you think will? And what must become of you, if nothing do? Mistake me not to mean, that this one Fright should have more Effect upon you singly, than all the standing Motives to Reformation put together. But still, when it hath peculiarly awakened you, and revived the Impressions of them all on your Minds: if you suffer them to wear out again, and relapse into your former Inconsiderateness; you will be too likely to sleep on, till your final Ruin overtakes you. This Warning was designed for a signal Mercy to you. If you slight it; what can you expect, but to be left for the future to the Hardness of your own Hearts? Even should more of the same Kind follow, it is most likely, that you will grow accustomed to them; and like thousands of poor Wretches abroad, pursue
P your

your Sins fearlessly, with all the Elements, in their Turn, threatening from Time to Time immediate Perdition to you.

But, it may be, more than a few of you have felt no small Convictions for some Days past: only you dare not express them, either in Words or Behaviour, because the rest of the World would despise you. Yet perhaps, all the while, many of Them are under just the same Difficulty. You are afraid of Their Contempt; They are afraid of Yours: and would you, on both Sides, discover your Sentiments, you would support one another in what is Right, instead of awing one another into what is Wrong. But were you to stand single: are you to stifle and belie your Fear of God, for Fear of Man? Remember what our Lord and Master hath declared to those, who *are ashamed of Him and His Words, in a sinful and adulterous Generation* *. Very probably, in the Days of *Noah*, in those before the Overthrow of *Sodom*, there were Persons, disturbed not a little within, at the Lives they led, and the Threatnings they heard. But still, they knew not how to do otherwise than all around them did. So they went on with the Crowd: *they eat, they drank, they planted, they builded, they bought, they sold, they married, they were given in Marriage; and knew not, till the Flood came, and took them away; till it rained*

* Mark viii. 38.

Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all.*

But you will say, “ Are we then, at such
“ Times as these, to lay aside the common
“ Business and Offices of Life?” On no Account. Lay them aside always on this Day, as much as you can. But on others, it is not following them, it is not attending to them diligently, the far greatest Part of your Time; but attending to them so, as to neglect or break through higher Obligations, that is the Sin. The proper Employments of each Person’s Station are Duties, to which God hath called him. But they are to be done from an inward Principle of Submission to his Will, with a just Sense of the Vanity of this World, of the Importance of the next; and with a serious Care, *so to pass through Things temporal, that we finally lose not the Things eternal*†.

“ But if Business be allowable, are not Diversions too?” With what Intent do you ask this? Is it not indeed, that you may exclaim against your Teachers, it may be your Religion also, as unreasonably rigid, if we answer one Way; and pretend, that we approve of your going on just as you do, if we answer the other Way? Come with a better Meaning, and ask; and you shall have Satisfaction. But you may have it now. We dare not take

* Matth. xxiv. 38, 39. Luke xvii. 27, 28, 29. † Collect, 4th Sunday after Trinity.

upon us to say, that all Amusements are unlawful, to all Persons, at all Times. We believe, they are often innocent, sometimes useful and requisite. But we must say; and would to God the People of this Land would hear us, for they have great Need; that living to them, and doting on them, in the Manner now commonly practised, is a hainous, crying, pernicious Sin. Fortunes are impaired and ruined; Creditors postponed and defrauded; Healths worn out, and Lives thrown away; Children taught nothing that they ought, and initiated early into every Thing that they ought not; family, private, publick Affairs, disregarded; Modesty undermined, and common Honesty put to Trials, which often get the better of it: and all by the Means of such a mad Pursuit of Pleasure and Entertainment, of every Kind, real or imaginary, through almost every waking Hour, as was formerly unknown here; but hath been of late Years continually increasing; and is, if there be possible Room for it, increasing still; and spreading wider, amongst all Ranks of People, in Defiance to Religion, to Reason, to Law: even they who make the Laws, they who should execute them, they who should see that their Inferiors execute them, joining openly in the Violation of them, and so inviting all around them to do the same.

But could all these Mischiefs be avoided in such a Course of Life: yet is it nothing, that
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your Time, your Thoughts, your Souls are filled with Trifles and Follies; that you are engaged in them too late over Night, to attend here the next Morning on the Worship and Instruction, which your Maker hath appointed: that such Multitudes, instead of so important a Work, spend the former Part of this holy Day in needless Visittings and Airings, idle Excursions and Parties; and not a few, the latter Part in Debauchery or Gaming; that you lay aside, it may be feared entirely, the most improving Duties of Self-inspection and private Prayer; forget God, and give yourselves up to the World: that you cling to these Vanities, even at the Age when they become you the worst, till you drop into Eternity, with your Heads and your Hearts full of nothing else: and yet on the Merit of this wise Conduct, apprehend yourselves intitled to scorn, instead of honouring, those who act on other Principles?

If you cannot use Diversions, without running into such Lengths, indeed without Danger of coming in Sight of them; you are bound, as you value your Salvation, not to use them at all. And though you can use them ever so safely; it will both be pious, prudent and charitable, to abstain from all of them often, and from some of them perhaps altogether; were it only to guard others, to whom they may be less safe; and to shew the World, what it seems to have no remaining

Notion of, that Life may be supported, may be enjoyed, without them. The present Season of Lent used to be a Testimony of this: but of late all Methods have been employed to make it a Testimony of the contrary; by crowding into it, and even into the most sacred Week of it, as many Entertainments, both in private Houses and public Theatres, as can be contrived. If these Things are wrong, why may not you take the present Opportunity, when you have had so loud a Call to Seriousness, for beginning to practise a little more of it, than ordinary; and, for that Purpose, keep back from some Places, to which else you might have gone? Let others guess the Reason. If they ask, let them know it. If they deride you; either enter upon the Subject, or avoid it, as you see a Likelihood, or none, of doing Good: but at least keep to your Point; with Temper, with Charity, yet with Resolution.

“ But if we act thus, all the World will
“ shun us, we shall be left alone: what shall
“ we do?” The more valuable Part of the
World will not shun you: and the Loss of
some of your Company may be very far from
doing you Harm. It is likely, you will have
a good deal more Time to yourselves: but can
you not find, have you not already, full Em-
ployment for it? Discreet Conduct of your
own Affairs, kind Assistance of others, need-
ful Care of your Health, proper Improvement
of

of your Mind in useful Knowledge, these Things may surely fill up no small Part of your Day. But there is another Work, the most necessary of all, the *one Thing needful* *, to which perhaps you have not applied, near so much as it requires, near so much as you imagine: I mean, a serious practical Attention to your spiritual State. Surely you must be sensible, that the Business of a Christian is, not only to abstain from gross Wickedness, and observe the Forms of Piety, but to mortify that *Love of the World* and of Pleasure, which is inconsistent with *the Love of the Father* †; and *set our Affections on Things above, where Christ setteth at the right Hand of God* ‡; to cultivate and exercise Equity, Mildness and Charity towards all Men, and perform from a right Principle every Duty of every social Relation; yet to know, that after all *we are unprofitable Servants* ||, and must rely, not on our own Righteousness, but the Mercy of the Gospel. Great Numbers amongst you doubtless are, and may long, perhaps always, have been, what common Language calls moral, and even religious Persons. But are you what an awakened Conscience, what the *Scripture of Truth* §, calls so? Compare that, and the Directions, which wise and good Men have drawn out of it for your Use, with your past Actions, Words, and Thoughts. Examine both well; without frightening yourselves un-

* Luke x. 42.
|| Luke xvii. 10.

† 1 John ii. 15.
§ Dan. x. 21.

‡ Col. iii. 1, 2.

reasonably, or accusing yourselves unjustly, but without flattering yourselves at all: remembering, that God is merciful, but remembering also, that he is holy. This alone may prove no short Task. And if the Inquiry end on the whole in your Favour, as God grant it may; frequent Reflexions, that your Maker is your Friend, and Heaven your Inheritance, will enable you to pass your future Days very joyfully, how little soever may be contributed of superficial Happiness from any other Quarter. But at the best, you will assuredly perceive at the same Time, what will give you still further Occupation, many Things in yourselves to beg Forgiveness for, to amend, to watch over. And should you find, as I fear too many of you will, that *your Heart as yet is not right in the Sight of God; that you are still in the Gall of Bitterness and the Bond of Iniquity* *; here will be Work enough for you to do, though every Thing unnecessary be left undone: to humble yourselves before him with deep Contrition; to lay hold on his offered Mercy, with true Faith in the Merits of his Son; to pray for his Grace, and use it; to *cleanse yourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit* †. Never ask, what you shall do with your spare Time, till you have gone through these Things. And when you have, if the late providential Warning hath been, in the least Degree, the Occasion of your undertaking them, you will bless God to your

* Acts viii. 21, 23.

† 2 Cor. vii. 1.

dying Day for the Alarm, which it gave you.

Amidst the innumerable and inestimable Privileges, belonging to those, who have *acquainted themselves with Him, and are at Peace* *, one, peculiarly proper to be mentioned now, is, that while they preserve their Integrity, they will never have Cause to be dismayed or disturbed at whatever happens in this World. Some good Persons indeed may be tempted to accuse themselves of an irreligious Insensibility, that they have felt no more on the late Occasion. But if, on any Occasion, they have felt enough to make them fear God and serve him: let them never be grieved at what, in all Likelihood, is merely constitutional, if it be not rather a pious Serenity. We read, that when *Elijah stood before the Lord, first a great and strong Wind rent the Mountains and brake in Pieces the Rocks; but the Lord was not in the Wind: after the Wind was an Earthquake; but the Lord was not in the Earthquake: after the Earthquake was a Fire; but the Lord was not in the Fire: after the Fire was a small still Voice*, and in that God spoke to his Servant †. If then he hath spoken to us ever so gently, and we have heard him: it should be Matter of Comfort, not Despondency, that he hath found no Need of using Words of Terror to us. But a much commoner Case is, that pious Minds are struck, on these ex-

* Job xxii. 21.

† 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

traordinary Manifestations of Divine Power, with great sudden Horror. So was *David*: *My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee: and I am afraid of thy Judgments* *. So was *Moses* at Mount Sinai, when he said, *I exceedingly tremble and quake* †. Therefore never do you, of weaker Spirits, either think ill of yourselves or wonder, if your Feelings are both more painful and more durable, than you wish. Still they are essentially different from those of wicked Persons: your Dependence on God will enable you to check your Apprehensions, in some Measure, when at the highest, and in a while to recover your former Tranquillity: to say with *Job*, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him* ‡: or in the more triumphant Language of the Psalmist: *God is our Hope and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the Midst of the Sea* ||. The whole Frame of Nature, and every Thing that comes to pass in it, is friendly to Persons in earnest religious, and works together for their Good §. *Life or Death, Things present or Things to come, all Things are theirs; and they are Christ's; and Christ is God's* **..

Earthquakes in particular, terrible as they appear, have often been Marks of God's Favour to his People. There was one at the

* Ps. cxix. 120.

† Heb. xii. 21.

‡ Job xiii. 15.

§ Ps. xlv. 1, 2.

§ Rom. viii. 28.

** 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

Death,

Death, another at the Resurrection of our blessed Lord: the two great Bulwarks of Christian Comfort. *At the Day of Pentecost, there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind**, probably somewhat resembling the Sound, which you heard so lately. In a short Time after, on the first Attempt of persecuting the Disciples, *when they had prayed, the Place was shaken, where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the Word of God with Boldness†*. Again, when Paul and Silas were imprisoned, while they sang Praises unto God, suddenly there was a great Earthquake, so that the Foundations of the Prison were shaken, and all the Doors opened: which was immediately followed by the Conversion of the Jaylor and his Family; and the Deliverance of the Apostle and his Companion by the Magistrates‡. Why then should that so greatly affright You, which hath ministred to so many others, Cause of Thanksgiving?

“ It is somewhat extremely awful.” So is every Thing, that reminds us, with any Strength, of God and our latter End. And yet, if we are not reminded of them effectually, we are undone to Eternity. It is not near so awful, as what you notwithstanding profess to desire and pray for: the Time, when He shall come to *sit on his Throne, from whose Face Earth and Heaven shall flee away,*

* Acts ii. 1, 2. † Acts iv. 31. ‡ Acts xvi. 25, &c.

and no Place be found for them *. “ But we “ may be swallowed up instantly.” You may, this very Instant. And so you may die, every Moment, a thousand other Ways besides. But do you not consider, in whose Power it is, whether you shall or not? Cannot God preserve you? And will he not, if it be for your Advantage? Hear the Psalmist: *Who so dwelleth under the Defence of the most High, shall abide under the Shadow of the Almighty. Thou shalt not be afraid for the Terror by Night, nor the Destruction that wasteth at Noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy Side, and ten thousand at thy right Hand: but it shall not come nigh thee. With thine Eyes shalt thou behold, and see the Reward of the Ungodly* †. But if he thinks it proper you should die now, why is it not best for you? Shall you not escape by it innumerable, unknown Temptations, and Hazards to your Soul; and be safe and happy for ever? Humility bids you pray against sudden Death. But Resignation bids you receive it very contentedly, if after all God chuses it for you. In the most important Sense, no Death is sudden, for which you are prepared; and good Persons are prepared always.

But perhaps this Kind of Visitation alarms you, not merely as a dangerous one, but as a Token that God is angry. And he is so: but with whom? Not with the Good. Or if he

* Rev. xx. 11.

† Ps. xci. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8.

be, it is only a fatherly Displeasure, that we do not become better. And is not any Way of shewing that, infinitely kinder, than leaving us unreprieved, and letting us grow worse? If then you perceive yourselves to have been falling into Sin or Negligence; be thankful for so timely a Warning, and reform. But if you do not, or if you have rectified your Course; for the Honour of Religion be of good Courage. Keep far indeed from Levity of Heart, Speech and Behaviour: especially in Relation to a Providence, intended to produce very different Effects: but still maintain and express a peaceful, a cheerful Composure: nor let it once be said, that You were in the greatest Fear, who have Cause for none; while They were in none, who have Cause for the greatest. Yet if you cannot help this, consider it only as a very pardonable Weakness in yourselves: and instead of entertaining even a momentary Thought of envying Them, recollect with tender Pity, how swift the Hour of that inconceivably more terrible Shock is coming upon them, which the Words of St. John describe in so awakening a Manner. *And I beheld, and lo there was a great Earthquake: and the Sun became black as Sackcloth, and the Moon became as Blood, and the Stars fell unto the Earth; and the Heaven departed as a Scroll, when it is rolled together; and every Mountain and Island were removed out of their Place. And the Kings of the Earth, and the Great Men, and the Rich and the Mighty,*
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and every Bond-man and every Free-man, hid themselves in the Dens and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and said to the Mountains and the Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of Him, that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? If You desire to be able, your only Way is, to obey his Commands during Life, who is to determine your everlasting State after Death; observing the Apostle's Exhortation, with which I conclude: See that ye refuse not Him, that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on Earth, at the Delivery of the Law; much more shall not we, if we turn away from Him, that speaketh from Heaven: whose Voice then shook the Earth; but he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake, not the Earth only, but also Heaven. And this Word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those Things that are shaken, as of Things that are made; that those, which cannot be shaken, may remain. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom, that cannot be moved; let us have Grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear: for our God is a consuming Fire†.*

* Rev. vi. 12—17.

† Heb. xii. 25—29.

S E R M O N I X.

Preached at the Parish-Church of St.
James, Westminster, December 30,
1750, on resigning the Rectory.

2 C O R. xiii. 11.

Finally, Brethren, farewell. —

YOU have expected for several Months what you will immediately understand the Choice of these Words to import, my Resignation of the Office of your Minister. If any one blames me, or is sorry for it, I intreat him to consider. Above seventeen Years and a half have passed over my Head in this Place. I have spent the Flower and Vigour of my Life in your Service : and now I find, and must expect to find, myself growing less fit every Day for the Duties of so laborious a Cure. You would not wish to wear me quite out before my Time : I would not wish to be burthenome, without being useful to you : and it is much better, that you should be grieved at my Departure, than weary of my Stay ; that I should leave you, while I can do something, than continue with you, when I can do nothing : and convenient Opportunities of
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removing are not likely, as you must be sensible, to happen frequently. Besides, the Care of my Diocese requires me to be absent from you near half my Time: another Person may be able to bestow His upon you almost entirely. In so long a Space I have given Offence probably to more Persons than I am aware; whether just Offence, is not for me to say: my Successor will have offended no one. I have undergone some pretty severe Trials, with such Temper and Spirits as I could: but how either would hold out, in my declining Age, to undergo more of them, I cannot foresee. And therefore on the whole, I hope it will not be imputed to me as a Fault, that I have accepted of the Offer, which his Majesty's Goodness hath been induced to make me. I did not solicit to be brought amongst you; nor have I solicited to quit you. I had a large Income in the Church, when I came hither: I have not enriched myself by my Abode here: I shall not enrich myself by going from hence. Hitherto I trust I have not remarkably consulted my own Ease: and hereafter, through God's Grace, I shall be diligent according to my Ability, both in Preaching and other Duties of my Profession. But it must not be thought strange, if amongst these, I chiefly devote myself, to the private Study of the holy Scripture, and the daily Attendance on Divine Worship, in the Station, to which I am retiring. I return you my heartiest Thanks for your kind Acceptance of my Labours,

bours, for your Indulgence, for your Liberality to me. I humbly ask your Pardon for my Failings and Omissions, which I am sensible have been many: though I can truly say, that I have always uprightly endeavoured to promote your Good in every Thing, Spiritual and Temporal; and would willingly think I need not add, that I have in no Instance attempted to do you Injustice. If in any I can properly serve this Parish, or any Member of it, I shall ever embrace the Occasion with Pleasure. And for the best Proof, that I can give at present, of that Disposition, I beg leave to mention a few Things at Parting, about your parochial Affairs, your future Minister, and yourselves, which I conceive may be useful to you; and concerning which I beseech you to bear the same Freedom of Speech from me, that you have allowed me to use, on other Subjects, for so many Years past.

I begin with your civil Affairs. For both the Management of them, and the Judgment passed upon it, are Points, that may considerably affect, not only your Interest, but your Consciences too. Conducting them right is Matter of Conscience, on one Hand: and abstaining from unjust Accusations or Suspensions, and feeling Sentiments of just Gratitude, is so, on the other. In some of these Matters I have had a Share, jointly with your other Vestrymen: and should by no Means do them Justice, were I to omit saying, that I have

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found those of them, who have attended, impartially and disinterestedly studious, as might indeed be expected from their Ranks and Characters, of promoting your general Welfare; of rectifying Errors, and framing and executing due Regulations. To these therefore in particular I make my grateful Acknowledgments for the Assistance and Support, which they have so constantly and unanimously afforded me, in the most friendly and obliging Manner. Nor are they few or small Things, which on a fair Inquiry, you will find to have been done by them for your Advantage, within the last twenty Years: and that more have not, is principally owing to this, that their Authority extends to a less Part of your Concerns by far, than I believe you commonly imagine. For Instance, it doth not extend to that most important Article, the Care of your Poor: concerning the Maintenance and Government of whom however, they have in my Time drawn up and recommended Rules, that were the Product of much Examination and Thought; and on more Occasions than one, have given and repeated such Advice, as in some Things hath proved extremely serviceable; and would have been so in more, had it been sooner and better followed.

Besides your Vestry, there are several Meetings of other Persons for Parish Business, vulgarly called by the same Name, because they have been usually held in the same Place.
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And of these also I can assure you, with great Truth, that such, as I have been intitled to attend, are carried on with perfect Fidelity, and no small Vigilance. The Affairs transacted in them are, The Disposal of the Money collected yearly from House to House on the King's Letter; the Direction of that excellent Institution, your School of Charity Girls; and the Distribution of the Money given at the Sacrament: Part of which is employed in buying Coals and Coats and Gowns for indigent Persons, in the Winter Season; Part in cloathing, teaching and putting Apprentices, forty Boys of the Parish; Part in relieving, by the joint Approbation of the Rector and Church-Wardens, who meet for that End, such other Objects of Compassion, as apply to them: and of all the Disbursements before-mentioned, as exact an Account, as well can be, is kept. Thus far therefore I can answer for it, that you are served faithfully; whatever prudential Improvements longer Experience and better Judgment may be able to make, as they have already made some.

And in Officers, whose Proceedings have not usually fallen within my immediate Knowledge, I have had very little Ground to suspect wilful or gross Corruption or Negligence; and often the utmost Reason to be assured of exemplary Uprightness and Assiduity. Still the Burthen of your Poor is both a heavy one, as I fear it is in most old and large Parishes; and

a growing one, as I fear it is in all, old or new. That it cannot be lessened, I would on no Account venture to say. On the contrary I would earnestly exhort, here in publick, those of you, who are now, or hereafter shall be Overseers, as I have often done your Predecessors in private, and I hope not quite in vain, to procure all the Information and take all the Pains, that your other Engagements will permit, for that Purpose: to be very tender indeed to the Needy, where there is Cause; but not to be moved by false Good-nature of your own, by groundless Importunities of theirs, or unreasonable Recommendations of other Persons, to bestow on any, especially the Undeserving, more than is really necessary. I would further exhort you, with the same Intent, to discountenance as much as you possibly can, Idleness, Intemperance and Debauchery, which are the main Causes of Indigence; and use your utmost Influence, to make the Attendance on divine Worship and Instruction, at the Infirmary, universal, constant and beneficial: to study Unanimity and mutual Assistance, and *let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-glory**: to despise little Advantages and Self-indulgences; which, though they may be but a trifling Foundation for Complaint, frequently occasion a great deal: and together with doing what Good you can, labour to keep *your Good* from being *evil spoken of*†; particularly by a Readiness to

* Phil. ii. 3.

† Rom. xiv. 16.

give Satisfaction on any Article of your Conduct, to every fair Enquirer, who is concerned to ask it: endeavouring, according to the Apostle's Rule, *that no Man should blame you in this Abundance, which is administred by you; and providing for honest Things, not only in the Sight of the Lord, but in the Sight of Men**. For thus you will discharge your own Consciences, and prevent at once needless Expence and uncharitable Reflexions; you will gain Esteem to yourselves, and to the Office that you serve; make it both easy, and in some Measure necessary, to your Successors, to act rightly too; and so perhaps will long reap your Share of Profit, as well as Credit, from what you have done.

But then I must at the same Time, with equal Earnestness, beg those, who do not serve such Offices, to consider with Equity the Case of such as do. Reflect a little first, how tedious and irksome an Employment it is, to go about collecting Rates at thousands of Doors. Should not you think it very hard, to have this Work doubled and trebled upon you, by being needlessly sent away, and obliged to come again several Times over? Reflect also, how disagreeable it must be, to distribute this Collection weekly, daily, hourly almost, amongst fourteen or fifteen hundred miserable Wretches; to hear and see the Distresses of them all; to guard against the

* 2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.

Frauds, bear the Noisomness, undergo the Ill-language of too many of them. Would you imagine, that by doing all this, and receiving nothing for it, you had deserved to be spoken of, as the worst of Men? But you will say, There are grievous Abuses. And it is impossible to answer for every Case or every Person, through a Course of Years. But on the whole, I verily believe, there is little or no designed Abuse; and of indiscreet Management less than is apprehended. But were there as much; consider again: Persons of higher Rank disdain to undertake so mean an Office, as that of Overseers. Tradesmen therefore must: who from their Education cannot always have the most extended, or the clearest Views of Things: who have their own Business to fill up most of their Time; which must be minded, else they are undone: who come unexperienced into this difficult Employment, and do not continue in it long enough to acquire Experience sufficient; are backward perhaps, as we most of us are, to take Directions from others; are often divided in Opinion amongst themselves; and by the Time that they can agree what is right, find or think too much of their Year gone, to set about the Execution of it: who, besides all this, are too commonly driven to do what they would not, by the Sollicitations of their Neighbours, and even of their Superiors, on whom they depend; nay, sometimes are traduced and vilified for aiming to be more frugal, than those

those that went before them. Surely to Persons in these Circumstances great Allowances ought to be made: and that in Prudence, as well as Equity. Despair of pleasing you will tempt them to be careless what they do: whereas, if you manifest a Disposition to be satisfied with them, and thankful to them, so far as you have Cause, you will excite them to deserve still better of you; especially, if along with this, they were but more constantly and regularly inspected, assisted and supported, by the Justices of the Peace: to whom therefore I beg Leave here to recommend this good Work, as I have done elsewhere more than once. And I do it at present with the greater Hope of Success, because I know several of them are desirous of undertaking it; and am persuaded, that nothing but Want of Concert, and putting the Matter in a due Method, prevents it.

I have dwelt somewhat longer on the Affairs of your Poor, because they have produced Uneasinesses among you, not only against one another, but against your Minister: though he hath no more Concern in them, than to pay his Proportion towards this, as well as other common Burthens; excepting his general Duty, of exhorting all under his Care to do theirs. And I hope you must see, that this Exhortation of mine, which I have often thought of giving you before now, hath no other Motive than a most hearty Desire, that,

to speak in the Words immediately after the Text, you may *be of one Mind, and live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace be with you.* Let me now mention another Thing of a more ecclesiastical Nature. This Building, in which we are, greatly wants both cleaning and beautifying, as is too visible, and repairing also: which the Law, that founded the Parish, requires to be done by a Rate, levied on the Inhabitants. Lesser Repairs have been made, without a Rate, for many Years past, out of the Incomes arising from Pews and Burials. But that from the latter is greatly diminished: and both together cannot near do what is now wanted. And yet taking the Method, which after all must be taken, and the sooner the better, hath been delayed for fear of Clamour. Let me beseech you therefore, to remove these Apprehensions of your Officers beforehand, as far as you can, by proper Assurances that you understand the Case rightly; and when the Work is undertaken, to contribute your allotted Shares with Cheerfulness. I would not urge to you such low Considerations, as that of not coming behind other Parishes in this Respect, whom you excell so vastly in Wealth and Rank. It is much fitter to remind you of the distinguished Honour, due by Reason, Scripture, and the Consent of Mankind, to sacred Things; and of the Duty and Wisdom of not furnishing a Pretext, either to Unbelievers, or Papists, for triumphing over Christianity, or Protestantism;

as not requiring, or not being able to obtain, from its Professors, any Degree of that Decency in their Churches, which even the middle Sort of them would not bear to be wanting in their Dwelling-houses. Indeed every Thing publick, though of a civil Nature only, and yet more of a religious, ought far to exceed, in Point of Dignity, what is for mere private Use. And the Neglect of that Rule both shews, and will increase, a Preference of personal Interests to those of the Community. We read, that many among the Children of *Israel*, both Men and Women, brought voluntary *Offerings unto the Lord*, for the Work of the Tabernacle *. The early Christians imitated their Example, as soon as they durst; and after the superfluous Ornaments of following Ages were justly disapproved; valuable Presents have been made in the reformed Church of *England*, and in this very Church, for the greater Solemnity and Beauty of divine Service. Why would it not now be one fitting Mark of Regard to God, if Persons of Fortune and Condition were to do the same Thing? At least, will it not be a lamentable Mark of Disregard to him, if any murmur to do what the Law enjoins them?

But I proceed to speak to you concerning your future Minister. When I prepared this Part of my Discourse, I had not the least Guess who it would be; nor have I added or

* *Exod. xxxv. 5, &c.*

altered one Word since : nor am I sure that I know, even now : if I do, he is almost entirely a Stranger to me, except by what he hath written, which is excellent. And therefore you must understand me to speak, without any particular Reference to the Person, but only on a general Consideration of the Case. The spiritual and eternal Good of Multitudes of Souls will depend not a little on their Attention to his Instructions : and that will depend very much on the Opinion formed of him, and the Reception given him, at first. For God's Sake therefore, let none of you set out with Prepossession against him, of any Kind. For in all Likelihood they will wrong him : and assuredly they will do Harm to you. But especially I beg, that whoever professes any Respect for me, would shew it by paying a peculiar Respect to my Successor. In whatsoever he excells me, as I sincerely wish he may in all Things, acknowledge it freely, thank God for it, give him the Encouragement of knowing it : and never let any one be so absurd as to imagine, that he shall perform either a right or an acceptable Part to me, by detracting in the least from his Merit. If in any Thing he should seem to be inferior : probably a little Time and Use may change your Minds : you may be reconciled to, and perhaps by Degrees prefer, what you disliked, when it was new to you. Or if not, remember the Apostle's Observation : *Every Man hath his proper Gift of God : one after this Man-*

Manner, another after that *. He that is only second in such or such an Attainment, may be first in a different one, of equal or greater Benefit. And it is very unfair to judge of a Man's Character or Usefulness on the whole, by a single or a few Articles. Besides, he will be able to adapt both his Discourses and his Behaviour to you much better after a Time, than is possible while he is yet unacquainted with you; and to undertake more for your Service, after some Space for Preparation, than just at present: which you may recollect was my own Case. Therefore do not expect too much from him, nor be too easy of Belief against him, in the Beginning. And afterwards both consider and inquire, what is reasonable to expect, and what not, before you find Fault.

The Bodies and the Voices of Men, you well know, are not equally strong: and one may exert himself without Danger, to a Degree, which another, though seemingly as well qualified by Nature, must not attempt. Now *where there is a willing Mind, it is accepted* by Heaven, and should be by You, *according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not* †. And though Persons be able, yet such Things as are not enjoined, and have not been customary, you have no Right to demand, or expect, from them. Permit me to mention a few of these. The Sunday Even-

* 1 Cor. vii. 7.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12.

ings Lecture on the Catechism had its Rise but twelve Years ago : and there is none then, and scarce any on Week Days, in the neighbouring Parishes. Sermons occasionally by your Minister at the Chapels, in the Afternoon, are not above five Years older than that. The Salary for the reading of early and late Prayers at this Church was paid at first by voluntary Subscriptions : afterwards out of the Offertory Money : but now for the last twenty Years by the Rector ; and I believe no such Thing is done by any Rector elsewhere in the Nation. The Distribution of religious Tracts, at his Cost, to the Parishioners, particularly to those who are instructed for Confirmation, is of yet later Date. And therefore, if your succeeding Minister omits these Things, you are not to blame him : if he continues any of them, you are to thank him,

Another Point, akin to the last, in which I must intreat you to be reasonable with him, is the Expectation of Charity from him. I have all along had other considerable Preferment together with this. I have had Sums of Money, several Times of late Years, and this last a very great one, intrusted to my Disposal. The Case of my Successor may be extremely different : and both the High and the Low among you should allow for the Difference. It is become very usual with many of you to recommend, when requested, any poor
Per-

Person whom you know, I am sorry to add, and more than a few, whom you do not know, to the Rector for Relief; being deceived perhaps by Stories of pretended Legacies or Gifts, put into his Hands for that Purpose. And then he must either run a Risk of disobliging you, by rejecting your Recommendations; or be overburthened with the Expence, which they bring on him; or at least every Hour almost of his Time will be broken and filled up, with hearing and examining Distresses and Characters. This last Inconvenience, I assure you, hath grown upon me in such a Manner, that I do not know, how I could have continued to go through it. Therefore when poor Persons apply to you, remember, you ought to relieve them yourselves, if you are able: and if you are unable, you should consider, that more Objects than enough will come of Course to the Knowledge of your Minister, without adding to them thus. We of the Clergy should undoubtedly be ready, both to give our own Alms plentifully, and to assist others in giving theirs: but still, as even the Apostles pleaded, *it is not Reason, that we should leave the Word of God, and serve Tables* *.

Another Thing, which I must take the Liberty of asking for my Successor, is your Bounty. I again return you my Thanks for that, which you have exercised towards me.

* Acts vi. 2.

But

But indulge me, at the same Time, a few Words on the Subject. There are indeed legal Dues, belonging to the Rectory, so considerable, that were they all paid, and nothing more added, probably the Income would be greater, than it now is. But they are so far from being all paid, that in the principal Article, Easter Offerings, though expressly required by the Act of Parliament, which founded the Parish, I believe, two thousand Families, out of three, pay nothing. Such as are known to be poor, are never asked. Such as only say they are poor, though that Plea would neither be allowed them, nor made by them, in any other Case, are never asked again. And such as refuse, without condescending to alledge any Reason, have not in my Time, been either compelled, or to my Knowledge threatened or solicited. Yet surely it may be said without Offence, by one who hath now no Interest depending, that in such Matters, as well as others, Conscience binds all Men, both to pay what they know is due, and to make a fair Inquiry, whether what is demanded be not due. If they, that will do neither, were forced; they would have no Cause to complain. But the more your Minister loses by his Aversion to harsh Methods, the more he is intitled to your voluntary Kindness. This alone is what makes his Income large: and were it yet larger than it is, as perhaps you think it, permit me to say; He, that doth the Work, deserves the Wages; out of which

which no small Deductions will be made by Calls upon him of various Kinds. The utmost, that almost any of you give, bears, I conceive, no very high Proportion to several of your annual Expences on other Persons, and Purposes, of less Importance, to say no worse. And diminishing your Generosity must be, in some Measure, to the most disinterested Man, not only an undeserved Mortification, but a Discouragement of his Zeal to serve you. On every Account therefore obey the Scripture Rule, which, take Notice, is general: *Let him, that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him, that teacheth, in all good Things* *.

But a far more valuable Mark of your Regard to your Minister, and, I dare say, beyond Comparison a more agreeable one to him, will be, your Attendance on him here. I see no Cause to doubt, but you will have every Inducement to this, that you ever have had: and you will assuredly have the strongest which you can have; that assembling yourselves for Worship and Instruction is the Ordinance of Christ, from which you may expect such a Blessing on your Hearts and Lives, as you cannot expect without it. And I have taught you all this while, to very little Effect, if you have not yet learnt, that *neither is he, that planteth, any Thing; neither he, that watereth; but God, that giveth the Increase* †.

* Gal. vi. 6.

† 1 Cor. iii. 7.

If you *have Mens Persons in Admiration**, and come only to hear this or that Preacher; however you are pleased, however you are moved, no real and lasting Good will be at all likely to follow. And if you come to hear the Gospel, *not as the Word of Men*, but as *the Word of God*†; let who will dispense it, you will receive Benefit.

This Place indeed doth not afford Room for all the Inhabitants. But the Room, which it doth afford, is most equitably allotted to such as made the earliest Application for it: and they, who cannot as yet be accommodated here, may without Difficulty at the two Chapels. No one therefore needs omit divine Service: especially, as you have Prayers four Times every Day at the Church, twice every Day at the Chapels, and Sermons twice every Lord's Day at both. You have also had, for a considerable Part of the Year, a Lecture on the Catechism, equivalent to a Sermon, both on the Evening of that Day, and the Morning of another, the latter of which, at least, you will probably continue to have. And surely you may prevail on yourselves, if need be, to alter your usual Hour, of eating, or visiting, once or twice a Week; in Order to come the oftener, and adore your Maker; to hear his Word, and give your Servants Time to do the same Thing. Nay, why may not many of you so regulate your Affairs, as to frequent

* Jude, Ver. 16.

† 1 Thess. ii. 13.

daily

daily Prayers in the Church? Few of you, I fear, have them in your Families: *I speak this to your Shame* *. Nor must I fail to remind you, as you know I have often done, of that highly useful, and by no means terrible or difficult Duty, of receiving the Lord's Supper; enjoined all Christians, and yet absolutely slighted by most. But observe, at the same Time, that private Prayer and Meditation, suited to your inward State, is a Duty full as important, as publick Prayer, or hearing Sermons, or partaking of the Table of the Lord: and the latter, without the former, will be of small Efficacy. You may, if you will, despise either or both: and they are commonly despised, to a Degree not known in any other Christian Country, nor in this before the present Age. But the World is not the better for it: nor will You. Your Virtue will become insecure, and grievously imperfect; your Sense of Piety will wither away; your Hopes of Futurity will grow faint; your Fears of it, when you reflect, will strengthen; till you will be glad to throw off both together, if you can; and live and die like the Beasts that perish. Others will learn, and in Part from You, to think and act in the same Manner; every one's Profit, Pleasure, Anger or Caprice will be the only Rule of his Conduct: and what Security of any single Enjoyment of Life can there be, in such a State of Things?

* 1 Cor. vi. 5. xv. 34.

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But

But then, alas, going through every Exercise of Devotion, both here and at home, merely to do our Share towards keeping Society in good Order, is Policy, not Religion: and going through them for the Sake of the outward Act, without Care to improve by them, is Superstition; mistaking the Means for the End. *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, not to fix their Expectations of future Happiness on Forms of any Sort, but to teach them, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World, looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works* *. These are the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity: and I appeal to your Consciences, whether they are not also the Doctrines, which I have perpetually inculcated upon you; though with Mixtures, no doubt too frequent, of human Infirmary and Error. Yet notwithstanding these, I trust, through God's Mercy, I can safely say with St. Paul, *Ye know, from the first Day that I came among you, how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed and taught you; testifying Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* And could I say also, that I had done this, in a

* Tit. ii. 11—14.

proper Degree, *from House to House*, as well as *publickly*; then I might, with him too, *take you to Record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men**. But, though I hope I have never been backward to embrace Opportunities of this Sort, when offered me; yet that I have not more diligently sought them, and laboured to introduce more serious Discourse into my ordinary Visits to you, I am sensible is a Fault, which neither the Uncommonness of such Conversation, nor the Fear of disgusting Persons by it, are sufficient to excuse. Allow me therefore to make you such Amends, as I can, for this and all my Defects, by admonishing you solemnly now, and leaving it on your Hearts, that Religion is the greatest and most important of Truths; that the Business of this transitory Life, compared with which, Profits, Pleasures, Honours, Acquisitions of all Sorts, are Trifles and Follies, is the preparing for an endless one to come; that the true Preparation consists in active Love to God and Man and Virtue; that such Love can never be duly excited or maintained within us, but by the Methods which Heaven hath directed; and that these are, a deep Conviction of our Guilt and Weakness; an earnest and daily Application to our heavenly Father, in Faith of the Merits of his crucified Son, for the Pardon of our Transgressions, and the sanctifying Influences of his holy Spirit; a constant attentive Use of those Ordi-

* Acts xx. 18, 20, 21, 26.

nances, by which he hath appointed Both to be conveyed; a conscientious watchful Care of governing our Actions, Words and Thoughts, not by the Dictates of Inclination or Fashion, but the Precepts of Reason and Scripture. If I have taught any of you these Things effectually, God's Name be praised: teach them your Children, your Servants, your Friends; for neglecting their Instruction is partaking in their Sins. If I have not; for His Sake, and that of your Souls, learn them now: else *I have preached, and You have believed, in vain* *; and woe will be to Me, or You, or both of us, at the great Day.

You have peculiar Cause to *take Heed how ye hear* †. Persons of high Rank every where, and this Parish hath many such, are concerned beyond others to be *Patterns of good Works* ‡; and are too commonly beyond others Patterns of bad ones. Both They, and the middle Part of You, live amongst innumerable Incitements to unlawful Gratifications, unfit Expences; and Waste of precious Time, even the most precious of all, that of this Day, in idle pernicious Amusements. And the Contagion of this over-grown wicked City tempts the lowest Part of you, most dangerously, to all Sorts of Vices, and all Sorts of Crimes. Think then, how carefully you ought to preserve yourselves and yours, by the Antidote of

* 1 Cor. xv. 2.

† Luke viii. 18.

‡ Tit. ii. 7.

God's Word and Worship, from so destructive and deceitful Poisons.

Great Numbers of you have attended here very assiduously : you must have felt something stirred within you, that hath induced you to it : the Hopes of your Salvation depend on the Fruit, which that shall bring forth : and surely then you will not let it be blasted, and die away. To many of you I have spoken many Years : to some as long as you can remember : what Benefit have you received ? Barely receiving Pleasure is nothing. It will rather aggravate your Condemnation, if what hath affected you, hath not influenced you. Are you then become real, practical, inward, uniform Christians ? If not ; you are now going to have another Teacher : mind what you are taught in another manner, or you are undone for ever. *But, Beloved, we are persuaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak **.

Yet still, supposing you are truly religious, a further exceedingly material Question is, To what Degree in Religion are you arrived ? Is it a confirmed, lively, increasing one ; or faint and tottering ? Unless you gain Ground, you will lose it : if you are negligent, you will fall : and if you imagine yourselves as pious and virtuous, as you need be ; you are almost as far from it, as you can be. Search then

* Heb. vi. 9.

diligently, strengthen what is weak, and add what is deficient; *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* *. Whatever due Instruction I may have omitted to give you, it ought to have been, and is, your Concern to supply it to yourselves: and if I have in any Measure performed that Duty as I ought: remember, Improvement will be expected from you, in Proportion to the Advantages, which you have enjoyed. Through God's Mercy, some of you, that were bad, I have Cause to think are become good; and some, that were good, become better: but alas, how few are these, amongst the thousands, of whom this Parish consists! O may there prove to be many more, than are come to my Knowledge! Else I *must give Account* of the Success of my Ministry *with Grief* †: for the largest and best Part of it hath been employed on You: and fain therefore would I persuade myself, that it will be found to have produced a tolerable Share of good Effect. *For what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown of rejoicing? are not even ye, in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his Coming* ‡? But however I have failed hitherto, let me not, I beseech you, fail now to obtain, that if ever I have said any Thing to you, which raised any one Christian Purpose or Desire in your Hearts, you would at length set yourselves to recollect and accomplish it; and that if you have experienced nothing of this Kind from my Preaching, you

* James i. 4.

† Heb. xiii. 17.

‡ 1 Thess. ii. 19.
would

would the more conscientiously open your Breasts to the Impressions of that, which you will attend next: for glad shall I be, to have promoted your spiritual Welfare, be it only by this final Request; and to learn, that the Seed, which shall be sown from henceforward, yields beyond Comparison a more plentiful Harvest, than that which preceded. For God is my Record, if I may presume to adopt the Apostle's Words, *how greatly I long after you all, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ; and this I pray, that your Love may abound yet more and more, in Knowledge and all Judgment; that ye may approve the Things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without Offence till the Day of the Lord, being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the Glory and Praise of God **. Let then your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel: that whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear of your Affairs, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind †; not as in my Presence only, but now much more in my Absence, working out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do ‡.

Understand me not to mean taking an absolute and final Leave of you. As long as I am in this Tabernacle, to speak the Language of St. Peter, I shall think it meet, if desired and able, to stir you up, by putting you in Re-

* Phil. i. 8—11.

† Ver. 27.

‡ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

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membrance *. But this is the last Time I shall stand here in that peculiar Relation to you, which I have born so long. *And now therefore, Brethren,* to conclude with pronouncing over you the solemn Farewell of St. Paul, *I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified* †. There may we meet again, never to part more !

* 2 Pet. i. 13.

† Acts xx. 32.

S E R M O N X.

Preached before the Governors of the
London Hospital, or Infirmary, for
the Relief of Sick and Diseased Per-
sons, especially Manufacturers, and
Seamen in Merchants-Service, &c.
at the Parish-Church of St. *Law-*
rence-Jewry, on *Wednesday*, *Fe-*
bruary 20, 1754.

R o m. xii. 8.

—*He that giveth, let him do it with Sim-
plicity: he that ruleth, with Diligence: he
that sheweth Mercy, with Cheerfulness.*

O F all the benevolent Feelings, which
God hath planted in our Nature, Com-
passion is the most valuable. For it prompts
us the most directly to relieve the Miserable,
whose Distresses are much greater, than the
Enjoyments of the Happy can be here below :
and yet, without the Call of this tender Sym-
pathy, we should, far oftener than we do, turn
our Eyes from them, and leave them to their
Fate. Persons of all Ranks are frequently in
Circumstances, that demand Pity. But the
higher

higher Part of the World have it more in their Power to avoid Sufferings, than the lowest : and it is easier to assist the latter effectually. Their Poverty alone, indeed, if they are well able to provide themselves Necessaries, wants no Assistance. It is one requisite State in the Scale of Things, appointed by the Wisdom of Providence : and allows them a very comfortable Enjoyment of Life. But if Work be scarce, or their Families large, they may be grievously straitened, even in Health : and in Sickness, their Condition, though single, is lamentable ; and, when married, often extremely so. If only a Child be sick, they have seldom Leisure to attend it duly : but if the Parents are sick, all the Children must be neglected ; and the Labour, which used to maintain them, cease. They are destitute, both of Knowledge what to do, and of Money to procure Directions and Medicines, nay, perhaps, proper Food. They follow, at random, the Suggestions of Neighbours, no wiser than themselves : or, after languishing long, and growing worse than they needed, have Recourse for Cure, often to ignorant, often to rapacious Creatures ; who, if they chance to recover, yet strip them of all, and load them with Debts, that disquiet the rest of their Days ; and too commonly drive them to destructive Cordials, which unhappily the most Needy can afford ; or desperate Acts of Injustice to others, or Violence to their own Persons.

Religion,

Religion, Humanity, common Prudence, loudly require us to rescue them from such dreadful Evils. For they are our Brethren, and God hath committed them to our Care: we owe to their Industry all that we enjoy; and, without their Aid, should be far more helpless than they. It is true, many of them fall into Diseases and Want through their own Faults: and Bounty to them may encourage those Faults. But many also, with the utmost Diligence and Parsimony, can but just live. Now surely such ought to have the Comfort of knowing, that in all Events they shall be secured from Extremities. And, even could we distinguish the Blameable from the rest, we should make Allowances to them, for Ignorance, Frailty, Temptation: as we hope God and Man will to Us, who have less Excuse. While they are well, indeed, it will be right to let them fare more hardly: but neglecting them, when they are ill, is exposing them to perish, is next to murdering them. Their Distemper, it must be owned, is from God's Hand: but he commands us, both by Nature and Scripture, to alleviate it, if we can: and doubtful Consequences afford no Plea to the contrary. How do we know, that Mercy, exercised prudently, will not reclaim them; or that refusing it will prove a Warning to Them, or to others?

If then the sick Poor ought to have Relief, what is the best Manner of giving it? Barely
sup-

supplying them with Food, is doing little or nothing towards their Cure : and every Day's Continuance of their Sickneſs, that can be prevented, is juſt ſo much unneceſſary Addition of Wretchedneſs to themſelves, and of Damage to the Publick. If we furniſh them with Money alſo, they will often miſapply it. If we procure them Advice and Medicines : diſperſed, and unprovided, and unteachable as they are, the Charge will uſually be heavy, and the Succeſs very uncertain. Therefore Parochial Infirmaries have been erected, where they could; and may be of conſiderable Uſe, but far inferior to larger Hospitals. They are much more liable to the bad Influence of private Inter-eſt and Partiality : Governors, Practitioners, Attendants, will ſeldom be near ſo well qualified; and the Coſt of each Patient will be vaſtly greater. Publick Hospitals then are evidently the moſt deſirable. There, Cheats will never apply; proper Objects may have what is needful, as ſoon as ever they are indiſpoſed : if able, may go on with their Buſineſs; if not, may be taken into the Houſe. Thus, in both Caſes, they partake of the united Skill of learned Perſons, almoſt as largely as the higheſt of their Betters. And, in the latter Caſe, their Families are diſburdened of them : their Lodgings are much quieter and wholeſomer, than their own can eaſily be : their Phyſick is duly given, their Diet and whole Regimen ſuited to their Condition; and the Symptoms and Turns of their Diſeaſe watched

watched over, and reported, by experienced Nurses. Then further, the Art of healing is improved in these Places beyond all others: not, as the Vulgar sometimes fancy, by rash Trials of dangerous Experiments; but by frequent Occasions for able Professors to consult, and ingenious Candidates to learn from them, to the common Advantage of all Ranks of Men.

But, though publick Infirmaries are in general highly useful; and have accordingly been set up in many Parts of this Nation lately; and in none, I believe, laid down again, or disliked: yet they are the most useful in the most populous Cities. For to these, helpless Wretches need not be sent from a Distance, but are always at hand in them: they contain many poor Strangers, that come occasionally; many Sojourners, that have no legal Settlements. And besides, even such as have, are less known to the Rich, and less minded, amidst their Hurry of Business or Pleasure, than in Villages or smaller Towns. Now Multitudes of these are continually falling sick, and receiving Hurts: and, if left to themselves in their miserable Cellars and Garrets, must suffer beyond Conception, and most of them die. As therefore this is, to speak moderately, one of the largest of Cities; and the busiest also, which increases Accidents; Hospitals are peculiarly necessary for it.

Some

Some may think there were enough before the Erection of Ours. But the contrary is manifest: for the others are not emptier since. And though, instead of six Beds, with which it began thirteen Years ago, it hath now one hundred and thirty-five, which have been filled near nine Times each during the last Year; yet a large Proportion of pitiable Objects, brought in or recommended, have been rejected for want of Room: how cutting a Disappointment to them, you may, by supposing their Misfortunes your own, in some low Degree imagine. Of Out-Patients, there have been nine thousand four hundred within the same Time; and were, on the first of *January* last, sixteen hundred on the Books: which great Resort, a remarkable Distinction of our Hospital from all others, proves the Necessity of it, particularly in that Quarter; and, at the same Time, the good Success of the Remedies administered in it. But still that Success would be vastly augmented, if more could be taken in: because from a Distance many cannot come at all for Advice; and few will come for it so often, or follow it so strictly, as they should: nor will they be either dieted or nursed at home near so well.

It may seem an Objection to the Enlargement of Hospitals, that the Inhabitants within the Bills of Mortality are lessening. But alas, their Diseases and Distresses are increasing at the same Time. Intemperance, especially
in

in Spirituous Liquors, and Debauchery, destroy their Health and Fruitfulness: Love of Pleasures and Amusements, makes them idle and necessitous; and Contempt of Religion leaves bad Inclinations unrestrained. Were we wise, the utmost Zeal would be shewn to stop this Torrent of Folly and Sin, by the Authority, and above all by the Example, of Superiors: which, especially when it is bad, the next beneath them will imitate; and so downwards, to the lowest of all. For it is a strange Defect in Policy, not to think of preventing Persons from making themselves useless and wretched, but only of restoring them to a Condition of doing it again. But unless the former be vigorously attempted by well-advised Methods, of which God grant us better Hope, there will be a growing Demand for Hospitals, till the Number of our People is reduced yet further.

Still it may be alledged, that the Burthen of supporting them, instead of resting, as it doth, on a few, should be laid on the Community by a Law. But the Poor cannot make this Law; nor doth it appear that the Rich will: not to say, that if it were made, the Charitable would lose one principal Method of satisfying their own Minds, as well as others, that they are truly such. And besides, how are we sure that the Care would be so effectual, and the Charge, indeed our own Share of it, less, or so little, under the Management of
legal

legal Officers, *taking the Oversight by Constraint, or for Lucre*, as of those who take it *willingly, and of a ready Mind**? However, at present, Hospitals must depend on voluntary Gifts, as they have done in Time past.

Not that this excellent Institution began early in the World: which may seem very strange. But possibly Distempers were formerly fewer. And certainly, among the antient Heathens, Tenderneſs of Heart towards the Wretched was no common Virtue †. Nor did it among the *Jews* extend far: though *Moses* enjoins it towards all Men, repeatedly and pathetically ‡. But our blessed Saviour, the ſingular Good-nature of whoſe Doctrine is one ſtrong Evidence of its divine Original, beſides teaching more efficaciously, than had ever been done before, the Obligation of mutual Love in general, hath particularly inforced Mercy to the Sick, by his Miracles of healing, by his Parable of the good Samaritan ||, by

* 1 Pet. v. 2. † The Direction and Practice of *Cato* the Cenſor was, to ſell Slaves, when they became diſeaſed, or otherwiſe unfit for Labour. *Cato de Re Ruſtica*, *Plut. in Cat.* And *Suetonius* ſaith, that in the Reign of *Claudius*, (when the *Romans* were poliſhed in the higheſt Degree, and Philoſophy had tried its utmoſt Influence upon them,) ſome expoſed their ſick Slaves to periſh in the Iſle of *Æſculapius* at *Rome*: on which Account the Emperor ordered, that expoſing them ſhould be deemed giving them their Liberty, if they recovered; and that, if any choſe rather to put them to Death, it ſhould be puniſhed, as Murder. *Suet. in Claud. c. 25.*

‡ Exod. xxii. 21. xxiii. 9, 12. Lev. xix. 33, 34. xxv. 25, 36, 37. Deut. x. 19. xxiv. 14, 15, 17—22. xxvii. 19.

|| Luke x. 30—37.

his affecting Description of his own future Behaviour at the great Day of Judgment *. In consequence of this, we find the primitive Christians the most benevolent of Men †: and the Affection of their Successors to each other, a Subject of general Wonder ‡. We find those of *Rome*, who were the richest, sending Alms to their Brethren throughout the Earth ||: and those of *Alexandria* and *Carthage*, in the Desolations of a dreadful Plague, ministring to the Infected with astonishing Courage, while the Heathens gave Proofs of the most shocking Neglect and Barbarity §. Nay, those of the whole Eastern Empire, just after the several Cities of it had been persecuting them, in the Reign of *Maximin*, were the only Persons, who assisted others in the double Distress of Pestilence and Famine; attending on the Dying, burying the Dead, feeding the Hungry, without Distinction: which they did continually, with such Tenderneſs and Bounty in every Respect, that They and their God were publicly celebrated and honoured for it by all Men **. Nor do Christian Writers alone ascribe to them this Cha-

* Matth. xxv. 31—46.

† Acts ii. 44, 45. iv. 32—37. xi. 27—30. xxiv. 17. Rom. xv. 25, 26. 2 Cor. viii. 1—4. ix. 1, 2. Col. i. 4. 1 Theſſ. iv. 9. 2 Theſſ. i. 3. 1 Tim. v. 10. Philem. Ver. 7. Rev. ii. 19. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1. §. 1, 2, 55.

‡ Tert. Apol. c. 39, 42.

|| Dionys. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. 4. c. 23. & l. 7. c. 5.

§ Dionys. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. 7. c. 22. Cypr. Vit. per Pontium, p. 5.

** Euseb. H. E. l. 9. c. 8.

rafter. The profane *Lucian* acknowledges and ridicules their plentiful Almfgiving *. The apostate Emperor *Julian* confesses, that the Worshippers of his Gods disregarded their own Poor, and the Christians maintained those of both Professions. He gives Exhortations to the former, undeniably taken out of the New Testament, to amend, and imitate the *Galileans* in this and many other Points. But, distrusting their Effect, he had begun to appropriate large Revenues to the Support of the Credit of Paganism, against the Influences of the Charity of Christians †. Nor were these bountiful only to make and preserve Converts: for they continued so after their Faith became the reigning one ‡. Then, for it was impracticable before, a vast Variety of beneficent Foundations, and, amongst them, Hospitals for the Sick, Things unknown to preceding Ages ||, rose from the private Liberalities of Believers §, and were authoris'd and

* De morte Peregrini, p. 996, 997, 998. Ed. Bourdelot. Par. 1615.

† Julian. Fragg. Ep. p. 290, 305. Ep. 49. p. 429, &c. Ed. Spanh. Lips. 1696. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 3. p. 101, 102. Ed. Billii, Par. 1630. Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 16.

‡ Chrysost. Hom. 66. in Matth. p. 658. Tom. 7. Ed. Montf.

|| The Word *Valetudinarium* is in several Roman Authors: but seems to mean only a Receptacle for the sick Servants of a Family, in or near the House.

§ Jerom saith, that *Fabiola*, a wealthy Christian Widow, of a noble Roman Family, who died in his Time, first erected a publick Infirmary: *Prima omnium vocorumque instituit, in quo egrotantes colligeret de plateis, & consumpta languoribus atque inedia miserorum membra foveret.* Ep. 84. Ed. Bened. 77. Ed. Veron.

and regulated by the civil Power *: which have spread wherever the Gospel hath spread : and make one principal Glory of our own Church, our own Times, and the Reign of our gracious Sovereign. These Facts, I hope, will recommend, not only Charity to Christians, but Christianity to charitable Persons : and shew the Wisdom of learning from Scripture the proper Directions for carrying on the good Work, which we are met to countenance.

Now there can be no better Directions, than those of the Text. For it comprehends the three necessary Points : a due Provision, a vigilant Superintendence, a willing Execution.

I. A due Provision. *He that giveth, let him do it with Simplicity :* fairly allowing every right Motive its full Effect upon him. The mere Instinct of Pity will operate irregularly, and sometimes hurtfully. Mere worldly Prudence will be generally misled by present Self-Interest. A Sense of moral Fitness, without the Sanction of divine Authority, will scarce ever produce much Fruit, in common Soils at least. And the Religion of Reason alone, will but seldom furnish Precepts determinate

ron. And *Gregory the Presbyter*, in his *Life of Nazianzen*, saith, that *Basil*, who lived in the same Age with *Jerom*, built a large Hospital for Lepers, with Charity Money, which he collected for that Purpose.

* Cod. l. 1. tit. 2. leg. 15, 19, 22. tit. 3. leg. 18.

enough, or excite Hopes and Fears powerful enough, to supply the Deficiency. Doubtless we Christians ought sincerely to esteem those, who, from any true Principle, benefit their Fellow-creatures : but at the same Time earnestly to pray God, that he would make them *altogether such as we are* *. The Gospel weakens no other Inducement : and adds such persuasive ones of its own, that whoever embraces it *in Simplicity and godly Sincerity* †, must be charitable. And hence I presume it is, that the Word, translated *Simplicity* in the Text, signifies Liberality in several Places of the New Testament ‡, and perhaps in no Book written before it. For one, who is a Christian *in Singleness of Heart* ||, can neither covet immoderate Wealth, nor hoard up against improbable Accidents, nor make false Pleas of Inability, nor examine the Merits of the Distressed with Rigor §, nor confine his Alms to some favourite Objects of Beneficence ; but will fairly consider the Claims of every different Sort. And none hath better, than this Hospital, on various Accounts.

It stands remote from others, in the Neighbourhood of innumerable Mariners and Artificers, whom their Manner of Life subjects to

* Acts xxvi. 29. † 2 Cor. i. 12. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 2.
ix. 11, 13. Jam. i. 5. || Acts ii. 46. Eph. vi. 5. Col.
iii. 22. § *Le Clerc* apprehends, that the Apostle meant
particularly to give this Direction : which some of the early
Christians carried to a great Length. See *the Shepherd of
Hermas*, l. 2. mand. 2.

many grievous Casualties and Diseases. Of these it takes Care, if the Case so require, (and there have been three hundred and thirty such during the last Year,) without any Recommendation: but in all Cases, without any Payment on their Admission, or any Security for their Burial, should they die: which two Demands exclude the most Helpless from other Hospitals, and throw them on Ours: but the Advantage increases far beyond the Expence.

Its Support hath always been from spontaneous Gifts: and, within the Compass of the annual Account lately published, they have fallen short of the Disbursements by three hundred and fifty Pounds. Now it could not subsist, much less be enlarged as it ought, were this Diminution to continue. But we trust it is only temporary; proceeding from Zeal to carry on with Speed a separate, but important Part of the general Design. A new Structure, discreetly postponed at first, is now erecting, in a purer Air, with larger and loftier Rooms, yet wholly contrived for Health not Shew, in which far greater Numbers will be far better accommodated. And, indeed, the Erection of it is a double Charity, by employing the healthy Poor, as well as providing for the unhealthy. On this near eighteen hundred Pounds have been laid out, in the last Twelve-month, more than hath been received in that Time: and only two hundred ninety-three

remain in Bank. The Friends to it therefore, I hope, will not fail to consider, that the sooner it is finished, the sooner the Money already expended on it will become useful, and the Charge of having two Houses at once will cease. And such, as were not Friends to it, ought to consider also, that, while others are contributing to the Building, the Fund for the Patients will sink, unless they supply the Deficiency. When it is once compleated, though larger Donations will be wanted, than before it was begun; because more Persons will be admitted than can now: yet, as the whole will be directly applied to their Use; the Benefit of the Hospital, in Proportion to the Cost, will be much more visible, than it hath been hitherto.

II. The Second Point is, a vigilant Superintendence. *He that ruleth, with Diligence.*

Some of the Governors, indeed, cannot be expected to attend, unless on Occasions very extraordinary. The mere Honour of their Names in the List of Subscribers will do great Service: and their occasional Recommendations and Vindications of the Charity, yet greater. But the Assistance of able and experienced Persons, as Visitors, (an Office to be faithfully discharged, when undertaken) and of considerable Persons also at the weekly and other Boards, will be a meritorious Addition to their Con-

Contributions : and the more, as only the Desire of doing Good can render it agreeable to them. This will satisfy the World, that every thing goes on well. For good Government is what distributes properly the Nourishment, that Benefactions furnish ; and animates the whole Machine : of which, Care or Neglect will wonderfully augment or frustrate the Use. In a System compounded of so many Parts, Precaution to obviate Disorders, or Interposition to rectify them, must be continual. And where no positive Faults appear, admirable Improvements may be invented, or imported from other Places. Indeed Proposals for that End should not be rashly made : but very candidly considered, when they are made, and yet not over-warmly pressed. For if they are right, in Time they will prevail. And eager Contentions are solicitously to be avoided in all Points : Partialities of every Sort to be laid aside : the Advantage of the House to be solely kept in view ; and even that pursued with Gentleness, and the most obliging mutual Regards. But though Diffension, like an acute Distemper, threatens the most loudly, and brings on the suddenest Danger ; yet, if the Crisis be favourable, all may be as well or better than before : but languid Supineness is a chronical Disease, that proceeds with slow and silent, but surer Steps, towards a Dissolution. The former happens oftenest in the Beginning of these Undertakings ; and I hope you are compleatly got over it : the latter in

the Progress; of which therefore beware. Mark out and engage fit Persons to join with you, and succeed you, as acting Governors: infuse the Spirit of right Management into them, and instruct them in the fundamental Articles of it.

One Article, of almost unspeakable Moment, is Cleanliness: which you have lately consulted with much Prudence, in providing Change of fresh Beds. But frequent Renewal of fresh Air is found to be another indispensable Requisite for the Recovery, and even the Preservation of Health, especially when Numbers are confined together in the same Room. Yet few sufficiently know this: and Attendants, to save themselves Trouble, are unwilling to regard it: and the Change must be made, in the Case of the Sick, with no little Caution. An excellent Man*, who hath long been an Ornament to his Profession as a Clergyman, and to his Country as a Philosopher, hath shewn the best Means, as well as the Necessity, of making Provision for this Purpose: and will gladly give minuter Directions; which may be of considerable Benefit in your present House, and of much greater in fitting up your new one.

But there is another Article, on which I must beg Leave to enlarge a little more: that of religious Worship and Instruction. Prayers

* Dr. Stephen Hales.

are read on two Week-days : but they should be read, and a Sermon preached, on the Lord's-Day also ; as, I believe, is done in every other Hospital. The Omission will be interpreted, if continued, a Slight on Christianity : and cannot fail to grieve extremely all the pious Part of the Sick : whereas publick Devotions and Exhortations then, will not only comfort these, but probably awaken many of the rest to a Reverence of the Day : which, being their only one of Leisure, must be the best of their Lives, or the worst *. But bare general Forms have often small Efficacy. And therefore a distinct personal Application ought moreover to be made to each of them : not to fill their Heads with empty Words, or with idle, and much less with hurtful Notions, but to excite in their Souls a strong and practical Sense, that He, from whom they are, and on whom they depend here and hereafter, hath sent from Heaven to *teach them, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ : who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity ; and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works* †.

* On this Admonition, the late Lord Viscount *Folkestone* gave privately an Allowance for performing the *Sunday Service*, till the Hospital provided for it.

† Tit. ii. 12, 13, 14.

These Doctrines, proposed to them compassionately and discreetly, when their Condition permits them to reflect without Hazard, will give to the Well-disposed inexpressible Consolation; and to the Worst no more than useful Terror. A penitent Conviction of their past Sins will instantly render them humble, contented, orderly, and observant in all Respects: it must, if they die, have some good Influence on their future State; and may have the very best on many By-standers. But if they recover, as eight in nine do, fixing it deeply in their Hearts will prompt them to every Thing right, for themselves, and all with whom they are concerned; will restrain them from every Thing wrong, and make them happy under all Restraints and all Afflictions, by the Assurance of an eternal Recompense: which inestimable Effects nothing else can have. Possibly scarce any Principles of Christianity or Morality have ever been taught them: for, in this Land of abused Liberty, That is determined by Chance, or arbitrary Choice. Possibly none ever will, unless it be here: and here they may be inculcated on them with peculiar Advantage. They have Leisure to think: are kept cool and low: have not their vicious Companions round them, to deride Seriousness; but Fellow-sufferers, to applaud it. They experience the Value of Religion and Virtue: for to these they owe the tender Care, that is taken of them. Pious Books are read in the Wards, by such as can,

to the rest : which will be much better minded, after separate Exhortations made to each. And a small Gift of short admonitory Tracts, judiciously chosen for them, when they go away, will tend very powerfully, through God's Blessing, to perpetuate the Impressions, which they have received. At least we shall thus have tried what, even in worldly Wisdom, we ought. A considerable Share of the Poverty and Diseases, and some Share of the Accidents, that bring Persons to Hospitals, arises from their Wickedness : and therefore amending them is the Way to prevent their Return thither. Publick Wealth and Strength consists, partly in the Numbers, partly in the Usefulness of the People. Now both will bear a near Proportion to their Morals : on which also the private Security and domestick Enjoyment of Life almost intirely rests. And many of the poor Wretches cured, if they go away as vile as they come, will have Cause to wish, with their Families and the Community, that their Distempers had proved mortal. Even supposing Men could be kept sufficiently in Order, against their Judgments and Wills, by Dread of temporal Punishments ; their Situation must be a very uneasy one : whereas thankful Obedience to a just Ruler, and gracious Rewarder, is the most pleasing Motive imaginable. But evidently they cannot : nor any where so little, as where the Limitation of the Magistrate's Authority by Law is the strictest. And they must have a
strangely

strangely self-denying Zeal against Religion, who had rather, that those about them should despise it and be mischievous, than revere it and be harmless.

Indeed the Performance of all, that I have been recommending, will require some Addition of Expenditure: but not much in Comparison, not more than is allowed elsewhere, not without receiving a valuable Consideration in Return. Good Persons will contribute to it; will, if desired, bear the whole of it; will be more liberal to the other Parts of the Charity for it: the Reputation of the House will be heightened by it; which, I must tell you, suffers from delaying so necessary a Provision.

I would only say further on the second Head, that when Patients are discharged, the good Advice of the Board, and of the Governors who recommended them, may have vast Weight with them: especially if it be enforced by some Assistance, either from the common Stock, or private Liberality, for present Support, till they get Strength and Business.

III. The third and last Point is a willing Execution. *He that sheweth Mercy, with Cheerfulness.* For *showing Mercy* is understood by the best Commentators * to signify

* Ελεῖντας hīc vocat, qui ægrotis aderant. GROTI.

here,

here, what the like Phrase comprehends in the History of the benevolent *Samaritan* *, ministering personally to the Objects of the Charity: and *Cheerfulness* † denotes Goodwill, both to Them and to the Employment. All depends at last on the Care and Kindness of Those, who are engaged in this immediate Application: in which they must indeed see melancholy and shocking Sights, and perform low and disgustful Offices. But Religion hath the Secret to make every Thing agreeable: and their Occupations are so much more beneficial to Mankind, and better fitted to improve their own Hearts, than Providence hath allotted to most others, that they have Cause on Reflexion to be satisfied, and even pleased, with their Condition.

The general Duty of all, who attend on this good Work is, industriously to further, and in no Respect to counteract, the Intent of it: to abstain from provoking, discouraging, profane or immodest, Behaviour and Discourse: and to deter or dissuade, so far as they can, every one concerned, from whatever is faulty. The particular Duty of Him, who ministers in Holy Things, hath been already intimated. Physicians and Surgeons are habituated to Humanity and Decency: and will undoubtedly shew, and require that all under them shew, as much of it to these poor Creatures, as to

* Luke x. 37.
animi significat. GROT.

† *Παρόρης* hoc loco promptitudinem

their

their Betters. The Officers of the House must not only be upright, frugal, diligent, themselves; but see, both that inferior Servants be assiduous and punctual, faithful and impartial, gentle and tender, which I understand is expressly charged on them; and likewise, that the Patients conform to the Rules prescribed them. Failures in the very lowest Part of the Management, and that seem but small, may be extremely hurtful to the Sick: and, though they are not, will be mentioned by them in strong Terms, when they come out: and such Reports will reach their Recommenders and others, and in all Likelihood be aggravated, to the unknown Disadvantage of the Charity.

But the Characters and Conduct, both of the Governors and of those whom they intrust, give such Assurance, that all is and will be carried on well, that I proceed, in Conclusion, boldly to ask your generous Contributions to this excellent Undertaking.

Most of the piteous Objects, for whom it provides, become such in working for You. Long Voyages, or dangerous Enterprises, or Employments liable to Mischances, or Labour on unwholesome Materials, or earnest active Industry, or close Confinement and sedentary Diligence, are the usual Causes of their Sufferings; and the principal Sources of our national Riches and Grandeur, of the Conveniencies

niencies and Elegancies and Enjoyments of Life. So that indeed they are Martyrs to the publick Service. And were it only to the publick Luxury, the Fault would not be in Them, but in you, their Superiors, who dispose of them so : and who ought not surely to let them lie unrelieved in Languishment or Torture, for having furnished you the Means of Pomp and Delicacy. If you do, you are sadly unworthy of the kind Providence, which hath exalted you above them, to be its own Stewards for their Welfare.

But they are more directly the Servants of You, Merchants and Traders : to whom they are Instruments of earning Wealth and Honours, for a bare Subsistence. Think then, what you should feel in their Situation, were you neglected after all, when Illness comes upon you. Think also, that industrious Persons are more in Number for every one such, whose Life is saved, or who is sooner or more perfectly restored to Health. These Considerations will clearly shew you, that all Persons of Eminence in Trade should be liberal Subscribers ; and the rest occasional, if they cannot be stated, Benefactors. The present is one Occasion. The Banker, or the Box, or any Friend of the Hospital, will afford you other Opportunities, when you please. And you well know, that small Sums frequently given, make a large Total : besides that even
the

272 *A Sermon preached before the*
the Widow's Mite singly is precious in the
Sight of God *.

Some, of various Ranks, may not know Objects enough for their Charity: may not have Leisure or Convenience to inquire after them: may not care to trust or trouble others with doing it. Here then is a Way open for such to bestow, unquestionably well, just as much as they wish. And they should give the more, because they are put to no Difficulties, in order to give. Others have had Servants, or Dependents, or Neighbours, under Cure in the Infirmary, of whom they would else have taken the Charge themselves. Now these ought at least to reimburse the Infirmary: for still they will be Gainers by it; but else, they will in effect defraud it.

Persons professing Religion cannot but be sensible, that were they to let Unbelievers excel them in Acts of Bounty, it would afford them such a Triumph, as Heaven forbid they should ever have. And Persons indifferent or unfavourable to Religion, most of them profess the highest Regard to Benevolence: as indeed, if doing Good to Men be the only Homage they will pay to God, surely they ought to be very abundant in it. We invite them therefore to a fair Contention with us on this Head. But at the same Time we must admonish them, that without moral Self-Gov-

* Mark xii. 41—44.

vernment,

vernment, and dutiful Piety, they will on the whole do Harm to their Fellow-creatures : or could that be otherwise, will fail of becoming inwardly such, as their all-wise Creator expects. And it is grievous to think, that with some Qualities so amiable, by the wilful or careless Neglect of the rest, they should deserve Condemnation, instead of Reward. Still *they shall obtain more Mercy*, than if they had not been *merciful* * : and therefore, however wicked in other Respects, it is highly their Interest to be virtuous in this. But *Charity shall cover the Multitude of Sins* †, only when it proceeds from an efficacious Resolution of universal Amendment. And then it is peculiarly, both a proper thankful Claim to God's Promise of Forgiveness, and likewise a proper Compensation to Men for past Injuries and Omissions : if it be sufficiently plentiful ; and bestowed on the Sufferers, when they can be found ; or on the Poor, as their Substitutes, when they cannot. I hope therefore, that every one here, whose Conscience tells him he hath offended against his Brethren and his heavenly Father, will take this Method of Reconciliation now without Delay.

If Desire of increasing your Wealth obstructs your Liberality ; you cannot, even in this World, receive near so much true Satisfaction from having added a little to it, as

* Matth. v. 7.

† 1 Pet. iv. 8.

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from

from having done the great Good, which that little is capable of doing. Besides, what is to become of your Wealth? Your Heirs are to have it. And how are they to employ it? If they are to perform Acts of Beneficence with it, why may not you as well? If they are only to go on augmenting it, where is the Use or End of that? And if they are to squander it, as sooner or later they will, you are only contriving to make yourself and them a Reproach, in contrary Ways.

Suppose then, on the other Hand, it be Pleasures and Amusements, that intercept your Charity: of what Kind are they? Many fashionable ones are mean, irrational, destructive of the Time, Fortune, Health, Temper, Principles, of those who delight in them. What will be your Credit and Weight now, what the Esteem of your Memory, and the State of your Posterity, an Age or two hence, if you live, and teach Them to live, only or chiefly to such Things? At least intermix with them somewhat worthy of Notice and of Praise. Retrench a Sin or a Folly, and give the Cost to these poor Creatures. Put out of your Power, by spending well, what else you would have spent ill. This will be of double Service to you.

But possibly you devote the Superfluity of your Income to innocent Entertainments, Ornaments, Decorations. And is it fitting then,
that

that you should be humouring your Fancy, or displaying your Taste, while Wretches around you are perishing and unassisted? But such Things, you will say, employ the Poor, and so do Good. Why, allowing that they do Good; which however is not true, without several Exceptions: yet the Poor, who are incapable of Employment, should be considered first. Others indeed *may* suffer, if you overlook them: but these *are* suffering. Others will make some Shift; perhaps a better for the Publick, if not for themselves too: but these can make none. Besides, you may be a great deal surer, that the Good, to which Self-Indulgence cannot prompt you, is meant for Good: and it will procure you far more Esteem from the Worthy and Considerate. Some of the Vain and Thoughtless perhaps may affect to ridicule you for it. But only avoid injudicious Projects of Beneficence, and Degrees of Liberality inconsistent with other Obligations or Proprieties: and you will be abundantly supported, within and without. Private Parsimony, when moderate, and combined with Generosity in Matters of publick Concern, was highly celebrated, even by Heathens, in former Ages*; and will to the latest be an Honour, and selfish Pomp and Luxury a Disgrace, to all Nations and all Persons, that are noted for either. The Givers of memorable single Benefactions indeed will

* Cic. pro L. Flacco. §. 12. Hor. Od. 2. 15. 10—20. Sat. 2. 2. 102—105.

be longest and most extensively respected: but such as join with others, will also have Praise for it, equal to their modest Desires. In Our Hospital particularly, their Names and Contributions are recorded, and openly proposed for Imitation: while yet they, who chuse it, may be as secret in their Donations to this Charity, as to any.

Possibly you may think, it will be sufficiently carried on without your Help. But what if every Body were to think so? Besides, how do you know it will? And if it would, your Concern is, not so much that good Works be done, as that You do your Share towards them.

But you give to other Charities, to other Hospitals. And so do many of the bountiful Friends to this. Why then may not, why then should not, You be such a Friend to it likewise? But, at the very least, be not an Enemy. That we demand, as Justice. If we are wrong in any Thing, we shall be glad to correct it: if deficient, to supply it. If we think we excel in any Thing, we heartily wish we could excel in nothing. If we have chanced to take a Name, that may seem too lofty; we had rather never have taken it, than have given Offence by what was intended, not to arrogate the least Pre-eminence above our elder Sisters; but only to express, in the strongest Manner, how numerous the Objects, for whom Provision is wanted, were; and to whom we
princi-

principally trusted for the Means of relieving them.

Let us all therefore go on, amicably as well as diligently, in this and every Method of lessening Misery, and promoting Goodness and Happiness, in the World, from an humble Sense of Duty to the Maker of it: till the Exercise of the Virtues, adapted to our present suffering State, improve our Souls into a Fitness for that approaching Time of Enjoyment; when *God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, nor Sorrow, or Crying; neither shall there be any more Pain* *.

* Rev. xxi. 4.

S E R M O N X I.

Preached in the Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow*, *December 4, 1754*, at the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Societies.

MALACHI iii. 16.

Then they, that feared the Lord, spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.

THIS Prophecy was delivered long after the Return of the *Jews* from *Babylon*; when they had ceased in general to be superstitious and idolatrous, for it scarce accuses them once of either Sin, but were falling into the opposite Extreme of Indifference about all Religion. Many of the Priests themselves performed their Functions carelessly and contemptuously, from a Principle of mere worldly Interest*; and either neglected to instruct others, or misled them†. The People, partly, without Question, in Consequence of this,

* Mal. i. 6, 7, 10.

† ii. 7, 8.

were

were destitute of Zeal for God's Worship; *said it was a Weariness and snuffed at it*; sacrificed to him the Refuse of their Cattle *, *robbed him in Tithes and Offerings* †, married Heathens without Scruple ‡, broke their Marriage Vows by Adultery ||, *dealt treacherously every Man against his Brother* §, were guilty of Oppression and Perjury **: for the Prophet expressly charges them with all these Crimes. And he adds, that they not only indulged, but applauded themselves in Impiety and Immorality: casting off with Scorn the serious Regard, which they had formerly paid to unpleasing Rules of Duty; and declaring those, who had fearlessly broke through them, the only wise Persons. *Your Words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and, What Profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? And now we call the Proud, happy: yea, they that work Wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered* ††. So that they still seem to have professed some Belief in a sort of Deity; but at the same Time prevailed on themselves to fancy, that he was unconcerned about their Treatment of Himself, or each other.

How lively a Picture this is, though drawn above two thousand Years ago, of the Free-

* Mal. i. 13, 14. † iii. 8, &c. ‡ ii. 11. || ii. 14.
§ ii. 10. ** iii. 5. †† iii. 13, 14, 15.

Livers and Free-Thinkers, as they have been called, of our own Age, and how large and increasing the Numbers of them are, I need not say: their Practices, their Discourse, their Writings, shew it too plainly. The Question is, While They behave thus, what should Our Behaviour be?

Now undoubtedly earnest Endeavours ought to be used for reclaiming them. And such as are qualified for this Employment, especially if they are likewise peculiarly called to it, should be conscientiously diligent in it: labouring to convince, both the avowedly Profane and Vicious, and all who lean towards them, of the Unreasonableness and final Uncomfortableness of their Notions, the absurd Rashness of their Talk, the ruinous Tendency of their Conduct, even in this Life, to themselves, to such as are most nearly connected with them, and to the Publick: but above all, of the certain future Misery, which they must bring on their own Heads, if the Maker of the World govern it with Justice or Wisdom, or indeed with real Goodness to the whole; and for what other Ends he could possibly create it, is utterly inconceivable.

But though every Person of plain Understanding and upright Heart is capable of seeing these Things; and most may represent them, with good Effect, to such as err through Inconsiderateness or bad Suggestions only, yet
many

many are not capable of debating them with acute and artful Opponents : or if they were, still would not be a Match, on other Accounts, for the Bold and Overbearing, the Contemptuous and Ridiculing. Whatever Cause a modest Man, of common Parts and Attainments, were to maintain against such, the Combat would be unequal, and therefore is better avoided by him. But supposing him ever so accomplished; what Success can be expected against scornful Levity, conceited Self-sufficiency, hardened Unfairness, or stupid Sensuality : against those, who, as the Apostle admirably describes them, *walk in the Vanity of their Mind, having the Understanding darkened, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Hearts ; who being past Feeling, have given themselves over unto Lasciviousness, to work all Uncleanness with Greediness* *. Probably formal Opposition would only provoke such to more shocking Expressions of Irreligion at the Time, and greater Mischievousness afterwards. Therefore Solomon's general Maxim and Direction is : *He that reproveth a Scornor, getteth to himself Shame : and he that rebuketh a wicked Man, getteth himself a Blot. Reprove not a Scornor, lest he hate thee : rebuke a wise Man, and he will love thee* †.

* Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19.

† Prov. ix. 7, 8.

Still they, to whose Province it belongs, must, while there is any View of Success, *instruct those who oppose themselves**, *reprove, rebuke†, exhort with all Authority‡*. And others must never even seem to countenance licentious Talk, and to give up the Cause of Religion when attacked; but *walk in Wisdom toward them that are without*, that is, towards Unbelievers; take Care that *their Speech be alway with Grace, seasoned with Salt* ||; becoming, inoffensive, discreet; and that they *be ready always to give an Answer to every Man, that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them§*. But usually it will be most adviseable, on all such Occasions, to speak briefly: and in so mild a Manner, that the Party concerned may not think himself challenged to attempt a Reply; yet in so home a one, that he may feel inwardly, and if possible also lastingly, the Force of what is said to him: which he will oftener do, than he will care to own it. For *the Words of the Wise are as Goats, and as Nails fastened***. Excepting what this Act of Charity may require, we shall do well to *keep our Mouths, as it were with a Bridle, while the Ungodly is in our Sight*: not disagreeably abstaining from all Conversation, but studiously from all which they can be likely to pervert; *keeping Silence*, where there is Danger of that, *even from good*

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.
 || Col. iv. 5, 6.

† 2 Tim. iv. 2.
 § 1 Pet. iii. 15.

‡ Tit. ii. 15.
 ** Eccles. xii. 11.

Words *; and not casting our Pearls before Swine, lest they trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rend † the well-meaning Giver.

The Duty therefore of the Generality of Christians, in Regard to the Enemies of their Faith and Practice, besides pitying them and praying for them, goes little further, than first securing themselves, and those who belong to them, from the Contagion; and determining with *Joshua*, that let others serve whom or what they chuse, *They and their Houses will serve the Lord* ‡: then, as Opportunity may offer, *strengthening the rest of their Brethren* ||, and using the Means of being mutually strengthened by them, in the same Resolution.

This Method, we find, the Pious and Virtuous took in the Days of *Malachi*. Doubtless the faithful *Priests and Messengers of the Lord of Hosts*, whose Lips were to keep Knowledge §, uttered it also: *lifted up their Voices like Trumpets to shew the People their Transgression, and the House of Jacob their Sins* **. But of the Bulk of Believers we read, not that they were forward to dispute, indeed we may be sure they were backward to intermix, with Unbelievers; but only, that *they, who feared the Lord, spake often one to another*, certainly of Things relating to his Fear; *and the Lord*

* Ps. xxxix. 2, 3.
 ¶ Luke xxii. 32.

† Matth. vii. 6.
 § Mal. ii. 7.

‡ Josh. xxiv. 15.
 ** Is. lviii. 1.

hearkened

284 *A Sermon preached at the
bearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remem-
brance was written before him, for them that
feared the Lord, and that thought upon his
Name.*

Now in these Words we have it plainly
signified to us,

I. That serious Conference amongst good
Persons is peculiarly needful in thoughtless and
irreligious Times.

II. That God observes and remembers,
and will reward, the proper Use of it.

These therefore shall be the two first Heads
of my Discourse : and then

III. I shall apply them to the present Oc-
casion.

I. That serious Conference amongst good
Persons is peculiarly needful in thoughtless and
irreligious Times.

Indeed we ought in all Times to shew by
our Conversation, what we are : and shall, in
some Degree, shew it of course, whether we
mean to do so, or not. If we express no Con-
cern for the Interests of Piety and Virtue in our
Words, we shall be justly suspected of having
but little in our Thoughts. *For out of the
Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.
A good Man out of the good Treasure of his
Heart bringeth forth good Things : and an evil
Man*

Man out of the evil Treasure bringeth forth evil Things *. Therefore, as it concerns us infinitely to know, of what Sort of Persons we are, so we should learn to judge of ourselves by our common Talk, as well as our Actions. For as *the Fruit declareth, if the Tree have been dressed, so is the Utterance of a Conception in the Heart of Man* †. If then the Conceptions which we utter, the Sort of Language, into which we naturally run, be, though not profane or immoral, yet frothy and vain and trifling; or, though of a graver Kind, favour of the Interests of this World only: let us take Notice, that such as are the Subjects that we dwell on, such in all Likelihood are We. For in Cases of much less Moment, we are sufficiently apt to speak of Things, about which we are solicitous: and is it not a very unpromising Sign then, if we seldom or never speak any Thing, which proves our Solitude for Religion and Morals? Possibly indeed the Prevalence of bad Custom in that Respect, or Fear to be thought guilty of Affectation, may restrain us from expressing our Sentiments, when we could wish to do it. And, in the Case of others, we should be as ready to allow this Excuse, as there is any Colour of Reason. But in our own, we should examine strictly, what the real Truth is: and amend our Manner of conversing, for a Memorial to amend likewise, if there be Need, our inward Dispositions.

* Matth. xii. 34, 35.

† Eccles xxvii. 6.

By

By speaking seriously on proper Occasions, we shall bind ourselves to act so: else the Inconsistence will shame us. And besides, as we are strangely apt to grow languid and flat in our good Inclinations, it is of vast Importance, that we should stir up each other: which a Word in Season, or a mere Hint, will often do surprisngly. *Iron sharpeneth Iron*, saith the wise King: *so a Man sharpeneth the Countenance of his Friend**; whets him up to attempt Improvements, and execute right Purposes. In whatever we set to learn, Partnership, joint Advice, mutual Incitement, Imitation, Emulation if there be Room for it, have unspeakable Force. Now we are most of us, God knows, but Learners in Piety, and perpetually in Danger of going back. Therefore the Scripture directs us to *consider one another to provoke to Love and good Works, to exhort one another*, as powerful Means of *holding fast our Faith and Integrity without wavering* †. So that we have not only Reason, but Command for the Practice: which will be further useful, by giving us Caution and Skill, as well as Courage and Spirit. The Snares of wicked Persons are many and artful: but the Counsel of worthy and experienced Friends may guard us even against the most dangerous of them. The Temptations of the wicked one surround us continually: but Communication with those, who *are not ignorant of his Devices* ‡, may effectually prevent his

* Prov. xxvii. 17. † Heb. x. 23, 24, 25. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 11.
getting

getting Advantage of us. Even general Discourse with such, though we do not open ourselves to them by particular Confidences, may be extremely beneficial to us: and especial Trust reposed in them, on extraordinary Occasions, with proportionable Circumspection, may be yet more essentially serviceable.

But even where we can receive little Instruction, we may enjoy however great Satisfaction, from Intimacy of Acquaintance with *Them who have obtained the like precious Faith with ourselves* *; who think and act and hope and expect as We do: from uniting in Friendship with those now, whom God, we trust, will unite with us in heavenly Bliss to all Eternity. We shall be far surer of finding these, upright, unenvious, considerate, benevolent, compassionate, than others, who have not equal Inducements: we shall be able to converse with them more frankly and openheartedly, as agreeing in our Sentiments of the principal Points, and depending on their Candour where we differ: we shall have the Pleasure of esteeming each others Characters; and rejoice in the Consideration, that we place our chief Regard on those, whom our Maker honours with His. What if they have some Faults or Indiscretions? Who else have so few, or so small? What if perhaps they are some of them not in all Respects the most entertaining? The Worthiness of their Hearts

* 2 Pet. i. 1.

will

will or ought to give us a higher Pleasure, than the brightest of other Accomplishments without it. What if they have not, all of them, the greatest Compass of Science, or Strength of Parts, or Knowledge of the World? They are infinitely wiser in the necessary Points, than Multitudes who have. What if they cannot promote our temporal Views? They will never betray us, they will never injure us; they will always forward us in the Way to eternal Happiness. Keeping at a Distance from such as these, who, we must be sensible, merit other Treatment; and paying Court to Persons of bad or no Principles, and blameable Lives, for the superficial Agreeableness or misused Abilities that they have, for the gay Appearance they make, or the little present Services, which they can do us; is so unequitable in itself, and so grievously and evidently prejudicial to the Cause of Religion and Probity and common Good; that they, who indulge themselves in it, have great Need to suspect the Rightness of their own Minds, and to apprehend imminent Danger of their being further depraved. There is indeed a Variety of Connexions in human Affairs, that may often prevent us from taking the different Notices of different Characters, which are their Due: but unless we honestly endeavour it, and contrive for it, as far as we can; and lament, not in Words of Form and Excuse now and then, but from the Bottom of our Hearts constantly, that we cannot do it more; we are
are

are either bad Persons within, or very imperfectly good. With whom then, let us ask ourselves, do we love to associate, and what Familiarities do we chuse? Can we say; if not, will we qualify ourselves for saying, with the Psalmist: *I am a Companion of all them that fear thee, and keep thy Commandments* *. *My Delight is upon the Saints, that are in the Earth, and upon such as excel in Virtue* †.

But conversing with religious People is peculiarly requisite in irreligious Times; when *the godly Man ceaseth*, when *the Faithful fail from among the Children of Men* ‡. In Proportion as the Number becomes smaller, it naturally invites to make the Union stricter, on various Accounts. Prevailing Neglect of God and his Commands can hardly fail to excite Anger in pious Breasts: but Grief it must cause. *Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes, because Men keep not thy Law* ||. Now both Indignation and Sorrow require Vent. Do we then feel neither on this Occasion? Or if we do, to whom shall we give them Vent, but to such as will cordially sympathize with us? Or if we want not their Acquaintance for any such Reason, we may for another, that is more important. Our Saviour hath forewarned us, that *because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold* §. Were only those around us in this Danger, we should la-

* Ps. cxix. 63.
‡ Ps. cxix. 136.

† Ps. xvi. 3.
§ Matth. xxiv. 12.

‡ Ps. xii. 1.

hour to prevent it: but we ourselves run, it may be, an equal Risque of declining, first into Lukewarmness, then into Doubt, then into Apostasy. Therefore St. Paul directs to the same Remedy with that in the Text, as a sovereign and specifick Antidote. *Take Heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin* *. Some Society we must have. By seeking that of good Persons, we shall have less Need to spend much of our Time with the Bad; and be less hurt by that Portion, which we are obliged to give up to them. They will not so readily dare to tempt us, mere good Breeding will be one Check upon them, when they perceive, by the Company we keep, and the Tenour of our common Speech agreeing with it, that we have made a Christian-Life our deliberate Choice. And this will be a vast Security and Ease to us. It is in Effect saying, though meekly and modestly, yet so as will awe the Generality of the World, *Away from me, ye Wicked: I will keep the Commandments of my God* †.

Indeed such Declarations, what Side we are of, by proper Expressions prudently introduced, and Acquaintances discreetly made, will not only restrain Sinners, from wounding our Ears with profane or licentious Talk, which will

* Heb. iii. 12, 13.

† Ps. cxix. 115.

at the same Time be some Diminution of their Guilt, but must, if they have any Reflexion and Diffidence, excite in them strong Suspicions, which through God's Blessing, may improve into full Persuasion, that the Doctrines and the Precepts, which They have slighted, and We reverence, are awful Realities. At least it will greatly comfort all, who are engaged in the same Cause with us; contribute much to preserve the Wavering, and singularly animate the Well-disposed, but timorous and distrustful of their own Judgments; to find, from the open and joint Professions of good Persons, that more such are left, than they imagined. The Wretches, who go about seeking whom they may devour *, endeavour to persuade them, that there are few or none. Let us shew them the contrary; and where they are to be met with, and that they are sufficiently united, as well as numerous, to be a Shelter and a Refuge: convince them, that if, by adhering to their Duty they lose the good Opinion, such as it is, of some, they shall gain the much more valuable Esteem of others: offer them our Support and Friendship, our Advice and Assistance. We are apt to be extremely zealous in patronizing the several Parties, that we form about other Affairs, often excessively trifling ones: in securing Persons to our Side, in guarding them against contrary Impressions. And can it be right, can it possibly consist with true Piety, that

* 1 Pet. v. 8.

we should have no Zeal, or next to none, for the greatest of all Concerns; for the Honour of our heavenly Father, our blessed Redeemer, our gracious Sanctifier, for the present and future Felicity of Mankind?

But further: even to the most zealous, free and friendly Discourse with their Well-wishers and Fellow-labourers may be of singular Benefit, by procuring them Advice, how to conduct and moderate their Zeal: which else may prompt them, and young Minds especially, to overleap the Bounds of Discretion; to make Attempts without Likelihood of Success, give Advantages to Adversaries, and bring Shame on their own Heads: the Consciousness of which perhaps may drive them, from their first Extreme, to the opposite and much worse. Here then particularly, but in many other Cases too, they *who fear the Lord* may, by mutual Communication, help each other to preserve at once *the Harmlessness of the Dove, and the Wisdom of the Serpent* *.

It is not by any Means necessary to these valuable Ends, that the whole Conversation of religious Persons, when they are together, be on the Subject of Religion. The bare Choice of such Company and Acquaintance is, of itself, a mutual Incitement to persevere and be active. Their Discourse on every Subject will be regulated by the Laws of Religion:

* Matth. x. 16.

the Truth and Importance of it will be supposed in all they say ; and on Occasion will be asserted, and shewn more directly. When it is proper, they will congratulate one another on the happy State, to which they have attained through Him, *who gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World** : they will animate one another to go on *their Way rejoicing†* : they will comfort one another‡, with Christian Considerations, under Difficulties and Afflictions. The Introduction indeed of pious Phrases, or even Sentiments, out of Time and Place, will be avoided, as improper and disgusting, instead of serviceable. But still, while we converse together so freely on every Thing besides, we need not surely be so extremely shy, as we commonly are, on the Head of Religion. It is true, the Name of it should not be profaned, any more than that of its Author, by irreverent vulgar Use : but to exclude and banish it under Colour of Respect, can never be fitting. It is a sadly false Delicacy, if we behave thus from Reverence to it : and a lamentable Mean-spiritedness, if we forbear to mention it from Fear or Shame. One would not be unreasonable or superfluous in Professions of Loyalty, of Friendship, of any Thing : but one would not be defective neither, and bring one's self into Suspicion, and one's Friends under Discouragements. The same then is the Rule concerning Piety : and expressing ourselves

* Gal. i. 4.

† Acts viii. 39.

‡ 1 Thess. iv. 18.

openly in its Favour, whenever Opportunity requires or invites, is no more than acting in Character. Vicious and impious Creatures boldly shew themselves in Their Characters. *They corrupt others, as the Psalmist observes, (indeed who can help observing it?) and speak of wicked Blasphemy: their Talking is against the Most High. They stretch forth their Mouth unto Heaven, and their Tongue goeth through the World. Therefore fall the People unto them,* taking their confident Assertions for Marks of superior Knowledge; *and thereout suck they no small Advantage* *: Advantage to their Cause at least, but often to their personal Interests also; which no Men are more given to pursue, by all Methods, direct or indirect. And what should keep Us, who have an infinitely better Cause, and that supported too by publick Authority, from avowing it in Opposition to them, especially along with those, who will join us in supporting it? Bad People cannot have one Motive for their Zeal, which we have for ours, and it is the strongest possible: that I mean, which the Text mentions

II. That God observes, and will reward it. *The Lord hearkened and heard, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him.*

He hears indeed every Thing, and can forget nothing. But the Prophet means, that he

* Ps. lxxiii. 8, 9, 10.

takes a gracious Notice, of this particularly, amongst other good Actions of his Servants: and will as certainly recompense, in the present Life, if it suit the other Purposes of infinite Wisdom, but however in the next, their Consultations and Declarations for the Promotion of his Honour, as if they were all registered in a Book, that lay continually open before him *. The World is apt to pay no Attention, or a very short-lived one, to the usefulest Labours of the best Christians. Many are condemned by their Example, and occasionally too thwarted by their Behaviour: nay, some perhaps envy their present Comfort of Mind, and Prospect of future Happiness. Therefore they speak of them with Severity or Scorn, bear hard upon them, try to set others against them: while, towards People of known bad Principles and Morals, they are all Indulgence and Charity. Mutual Conference and Counsel amongst serious Persons will considerably help them to support such Treatment. Yet still their Situation would often be a disconsolate and melancholy one, were their only Resource in themselves and this Life. But the Reflexion, that they act under the Eye of God, shall be directed and owned by Him; the Right, which they have, of saying to their own Hearts, and to each other, what our Saviour said to his Disciples, whom *he sent forth as Sheep amongst Wolves* †, *Fear not, little Flock; for it is your Father's good*

* Ps. lvi. 8.

† Matth. x. 16. Luke x. 3.

Pleasure to give you the Kingdom *; this alters the View of Things totally. Unpromising as present Appearances are, *the Kingdoms of this World shall be the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ* †, both in Profession and Practice, far more fully than any one of them hath been yet: and how great must be the Honour and the Joy of having contributed to this blessed Change! We indeed shall probably never see it here: but we shall look down upon it with Rapture from above. And while we remain below, how reviving is the Assurance, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, cultivate faithful Obedience to him, in your own Breasts, in as many more as you can: *and all other Things shall be added unto you* ‡: such Proportions of every worldly Advantage, as will prove really beneficial. And be they more or less, they will be enjoyed with singular Satisfaction, as Gifts of his Love. But more especially such may hope to escape better than others in Times of general Visitation and Punishment; as himself intimates in the Verse after the Text. *They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the Day, when I make up my Jewels*; or, as it rather should be translated *they shall be Jewels, or, a peculiar Treasure, to me*, preserved with uncommon Care, *in the Day that I make, or, appoint: and I will spare them, as a Man spareth his own Son, that serveth him.*

* Luke xii. 32.
33. Luke xii. 31.

† Rev. xi. 15.

‡ Matth. vi.

Persons may indeed, by concealing to which Side they belong, escape some little Persecutions, and secure some little Interests; and intitle themselves to some favourable Distinctions from the Worthless, of which last many seem extremely ambitious. But while the Disposer of all Things *gives them their Desire* in these Respects, *he sends Leanness withal into their Souls* *. Either they pine away with secret Conscioufness, that they act a mean Part; and feel their Sense of Duty grow languid for want of exerting it: or if they decline without perceiving the Decay, their State is the more dangerous and hopeless. Acknowledgment of God is as necessary to our Acceptance, as Faith in him. For St. Paul hath told us, that as *with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness*, so *with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation* †. And St. John hath ranked together in future Punishment, *the Fearful* with the *Unbelieving* ‡. Nay, our Saviour's own Declaration, which cannot be too often brought to mind, is: *Whoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels* ||.

Our Religion then is not to be dissembled, but avowed. *He, that is not openly with*

* Ps. cvi. 15.
|| Mark viii. 38.

† Rom. x. 10.

‡ Rev. xxi. 8.

Christ,

Christ, is against him * : disobeys his Directions, and frustrates, as far as he can, a valuable Part of his Design. But they, who assist his Followers to support his Cause, though wicked or thoughtless *Men revile them* for it, are expressly assured, that *great is their Reward in Heaven* † : always provided, that the rest of their Character and Conduct be suitable to this Part. For Scripture Promises, made to one Duty, must ever be understood on Supposition of its being performed from such Principles, as will effectually influence us to observe every Duty. And then, the more we abound in this particularly, the ampler will be our Recompence.

Now therefore I proceed,

III. To apply what hath been said, to the present Occasion.

Beneficial as pious Discourse and Consultation is in general, the Benefit may both be increased to ourselves and other serious Believers, and extended further amongst the Vicious and Inconsiderate, by our uniting into regular Societies for the more constant Intercourse of mutual Edification, and Support of religious Behaviour. In these, the Knot of virtuous Friendship is drawn closer ; each Member of them is by the rest warmed into greater Earnestness, furnished with fuller Advice, bound

* Matth. xii. 30. Luke xi. 23.
12. Luke vi. 22, 23.

† Matth. v. 11,

to stricter Circumspection. They are Shelters and Protections, to which the Weak may fly: they are *Cities*, though small, *set on a Hill*, to attract the Observation and direct the Steps of Travellers: they are *Lights* shining in *the World*, to shew Men the Path of Life*. Such indeed principally are the more publick *Assemblies* of Christians: which true Christians will on no Account ever *forsake*; though it be *the Manner of some* †, indeed of many in our Days, who yet retain the Name, to slight them, in direct Opposition both to Scripture and Reason. But going to Church at the appointed Times hath been represented as a thing, which People do thoughtlessly and of course, or to avoid Censure: whereas voluntary Societies, like yours, cannot be under that Imputation. Joining in Them proceeds plainly from deliberate Choice; and proclaims very seasonably in a degenerate Age, a Sense of Duty, which may through God's Blessing have excellent Effects. Indeed, were this Method recommended no other Way, the Practice of our Adversaries might teach it us. Unbelievers have their infidel Clubs: nay, turn into such, as far as they can, every Sort of Meeting for every other Purpose. Thus they strengthen each others Hands in Impiety: and surely then we should associate to *build up* each other in *our holy Faith* ‡. Not that you are to condemn those, who do not in Form become Members of your Societies. They may have

* Matth. v. 14.

† Heb. x. 25.

‡ Jude Ver. 20.

Reasons, with which you are unacquainted : they may do what is equivalent in some other Way ; they may judge ill in this Particular, and yet mean and act well in the main. But still joining more visibly and professedly in the Work of the Lord, as you do, may be of singular Service to yourselves and others.

Nor can it be doubted, but these Societies, in the many Years which they have subsisted, have preserved and reclaimed from Sin, improved and ripened in Goodness, great Multitudes of Souls : a Praise infinitely superior to all that any other Combinations can claim, which are instituted for worldly Pleasure or Profit ; and, without much Caution, may divert the Attention to wrong Matters, or fix it on such as are comparatively Trifles ; whereas yours points it directly to the *one Thing needful* *. Long Practice and Trial hath taught you, what Regulations are most proper to avoid Inconveniences ; and attain the excellent Ends, which you propose. Indeed the printed Orders of one of your Assemblies, which I take it for granted the rest have in Substance, are so perfectly right and wise, that you need but little more Direction, than often to read them carefully over, and keep up to the Spirit of them.

Merely paying a personal Attendance at your Societies, and joining with it a decent

* Luke x. 42.

Deportment in common Life, though it may be an Example of some spiritual Use to others, will be of little more than worldly Benefit to yourselves: indeed will deceive you fatally, if you rest in it. For a bare outside Profession is nothing, is Hypocrisy. Nay, though you practise from an inward Principle of Conscience ever so many human Virtues, but without Regard to God, you are only moral, not pious Men. Nay further, if you also worship and honour Him, and think that by this you merit Favour and Reward from him, you are miserably ignorant of his Holiness, and your own sinful Imperfections. Or even should you go yet another Step, and trust, not in your good Works, but in his Mercy, as discoverable by the Light of Reason only: that can never shew you certainly, whether, and in what Degree, his Mercy will extend to you; and though *not far from the Kingdom of God**, you still want one Thing before you can enter into it, Faith in this Mercy, as purchased by the Blood, and offered by the Gospel, of Jesus Christ. Numbers, alas, in our Days have wholly, or in part, slighted and cast off his Gospel. But instead of following Them, remember the Saying of St. Peter, when *many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him; Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life†.* If you once

* Mark xii. 34.

† John vi. 66, 67, 68.

leave

leave the revealed Will of God; what you are to do, will often be Matter of Doubt: but how you shall be able to do it, and what you are to hope or to fear, after doing so little rightly, and so much amiss, will be always uncertain. And in these Circumstances, worldly Interest, or Sensuality, or Vanity will soon tempt you, as too frequent Experience hath proved, first to live wickedly, then to disbelieve a future Recompence. Therefore if you love your Souls, if indeed you would preserve any Sense of Religion at all, stand fast in the Faith of your blessed Redeemer. Very possibly you may hear not only Jest thrown upon it, which deserve nothing more than Contempt and Abhorrence, but seeming or real Difficulties raised in Relation to it, and shrewd Objections urged against such a Doctrine, or such a Text, or such a Fact. Qualify yourselves to answer them, if you can: for Answers to them all there are. But if you cannot; rely securely, as you well may, on the accumulated Evidence of innumerable Miracles performed and Prophecies fulfilled, the Sublimity and Purity of the Doctrine, the incomparable Excellence of the Character of Christ, the disinterested Sufferings of his first Followers, the glorious Prevalence of his Gospel against all Opposition, the divine Efficacy of it on the Hearts of Men. These are general, obvious, irrefragable Proofs of the whole of Christianity at once: sufficient to outweigh ten thousand Exceptions to particular Parts.

Being

Being convinced then, that you ought to receive the Gospel of Christ, receive it in Simplicity, *as the Truth is in Jesus* *. Believe in him, as *God manifest in the Flesh* †, believe in the Atonement of his Death, the Necessity of the Grace of his Spirit, the Efficacy of his Institutions : and that with such a Faith, as will equally prompt you to pray for Pardon and Help, and to *cleanse yourselves*, by Means of the Assistance granted you, *from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God* ‡.

From this Faith will arise comfortable Hope, which differs only in Degree from joyful Assurance, of being in a State of Acceptance and Salvation. But the Scripture hath not taught us, nor is it safe, to judge of our spiritual Condition by any such delightful Feeling, instantaneously impressed upon us : for the presumptuous Sinner may work himself into the Imagination of it, and the modest and humble Saint experience it much less strongly. But the Rule is, to *know ourselves*, as well as others, *by our Fruits* ||. If our *Faith work by Love* §, Love of God, Love of our Neighbour, Love of Goodness and of Heaven, all is well. In these therefore exercise yourselves *to make your Calling and Election sure*, and your Societies respectable : *for if ye do these Things, ye shall never fall* **. .

* Eph. iv. 21.
|| Matth. vii. 16, &c.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.
§ Gal. v. 6.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1.
** 2 Pet. i. 10.

Each of you then be careful separately to *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things* *. *Abstain*, not only from all Evil, but all *Appearance of Evil* †, lest the Name of God be blasphemed through you among the Gentiles ‡. *Be not conformed to this World* || in any Thing sinful, ensnaring, suspicious; for such many of the Customs of this World are. Avoid unbecoming Levities in Discourse; Indulgence to the full, or Delicacy, in Meats and Drinks; vain Shew and Expence in Apparel, Amusements of bad Report or bad Example: form your Families, as well as yourselves, to *seek and set their Affections, not on Things on the Earth, but Things above, where Christ sitteth on the right Hand of God* §. Yet at the same Time recommend your Seriousness by as easy and cheerful a Deportment as you can; be *gentle* **, *be courteous* ††, excuse yourselves with Civility from what you cannot approve; censure no Liberties, that are innocent; and with Moderation join gracefully, if possible, in all harmless Things, to which Propriety invites you. In your Dealings and Business, be just, sincere, equitable, compassionate: for it is a dreadful Prejudice against the Gospel, when they, who distinguish themselves in the Profession of it, are thought unfair, indirect, unreasonable, hard-hearted. Be also diligent in your Vocations,

* Tit. ii. 10.

|| Rom. xii. 2.

†† 1 Pet. iii. 8.

† 1 Thess. v. 22.

§ Col. iii. 1, 2.

‡ Rom. ii. 24.

** Tit. iii. 2.

frugal,

frugal, prudent: for these also are Christian Duties: and if, for want of observing them, you fail to thrive tolerably well in the World, all will be imputed to your Expence of Time, and Thought, and Money, on your religious Meetings and Schemes. Besides, you ought both to *labour* and be saving, *that you may have to give to him that needeth* *. Infidels are apt to boast of their Charity and Good-nature: and it concerns us highly not to let them be superior to us in any Branch of our Saviour's *new Commandment*, universal Love†: but exercise even towards Them, who seldom fail to treat Us and our holy Faith despitefully and contemptuously, as far as they can, all the Humanity, Candour and Friendliness, that is consistent with being *undefiled and separate from Sinners* ‡. Much more be mild towards professed Christians, who seem either on the one Hand too rigid, or on the other defective, in Faith or Practice. Guard yourselves against both Extremes: warn Them, if properly called to it: but otherwise leave them *to their own Master, to stand or fall* ||. Even should any of them be so ill-informed or ill-tempered, as to think or speak slightly or harshly of you personally, or of your Societies; *instruct them in Meekness* §, if there be Hope of setting them right: if not, bear with them in Silence, and be content with the Testimony of a good Conscience.

* Eph. iv. 28.

|| Rom. xiv. 4.

† John xiii. 34.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 25.

‡ Heb. vii. 26.

In Proportion as each of you singly observes, or transgresses, these Gospel Rules, he will bring Honour or Shame on himself; on the particular Body, to which he belongs; on these Assemblies in general. And their influencing their Members effectually to eminent Goodness, is the best, indeed the only strong Argument, that you can use to invite others into them. Therefore take especial Care, that you may always be able to use that with Truth. For this End, beware in the first Place of letting your Conferences degenerate into *Form without Power* *, into Lukewarmness and Supineness, *a Name that you live*, while indeed you *are dead* †: and if there have been any Tendency this Way, *remember from whence you are fallen* ‡, *be zealous and repent* ||, and pray God to *revive his Work in the Midst of the Years* §. Beware in the next Place of running into Controversies and Disputes. You have wisely guarded against these, by admitting such Persons only as are well affected to our present happy Establishment in Church and State. Guard against them still further, by avoiding to debate any unnecessary Points of any Kind. Never indeed slight what God hath plainly taught, but never insist on what he hath not: about all needless Questions, allow different Opinions amongst yourselves, without talking of them; neither censure those of others, nor press your own. In

* 2 Tim. iii. 5.
 ‡ Rev. iii. 19.

† Rev. iii. 1.
 § Hab. iii. 2.

‡ Rev. ii. 5.

Matters of practical Religion indeed, you not only may, but ought to be earnest. Yet even there, despise not good Persons of less fervent Dispositions; and heat not one another, or yourselves, into unmeaning or injudicious Transports; but let your Piety be at once an affectionate and a *reasonable Service* *. Be mutually helpful, if you properly can, even in temporal Affairs. For the Apostle hath directed us to do good especially unto them, *that are of the Household of Faith* †: and therefore surely to those, whom we have the best Ground to think worthy Members of that Household. But your principal Concern, beyond all Comparison, is to promote your common Good in Spirituals: to *comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as ye do* ‡: if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, to restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness, each considering himself, lest he also be tempted ||: to suffer the Word of Exhortation §, and even of Rebuke, with Patience, according to that of the Psalmist, *Let the Righteous smite me friendly and reprove me* **, and of Solomon, *He that rebuketh a Man, shall afterwards find more Favour, than he that flattereth with the Tongue* ††. Nay, should any one by his Behaviour oblige you to have no longer Company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet the Precepts of Christian Charity bind you, not to count him an Enemy, but

* Rom. xii. 1.

|| Gal. vi. 1.

†† Prov. xxviii. 23.

† Gal. vi. 10.

§ Heb. xiii. 22.

‡ 1 Theff. v. 11.

** Ps. cxli. 5.

still, so far as there is any Room left, *admonish him as a Brother* *. But, Brethren, though I speak thus *boldly to you, as putting you in mind, yet I am persuaded of you, that ye are full of Goodness, and all Knowledge, able to admonish one another* †, without foreign Assistance. And therefore I add only my hearty Prayers, *that your Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge and all Judgment: that ye may approve Things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without Offence till the Day of Christ, being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the Glory and Praise of God* ‡.

* 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.
i. 9, 10, 11.

† Rom. xv. 14, 15.

‡ Phil.

S E R M O N X I I .

Preached before the Society corresponding with the *Incorporated Society in Dublin*, for promoting *English* Protestant Working-Schools in *Ireland*, at their General Meeting in the Parish-Church of *St. Mary le Bow*, on *Wednesday, April 27, 1757.*

P R O V. ix. 6.

Forsake the Foolish, and live : and go in the Way of Understanding.

TH E S E are the Words of Wisdom herself, speaking in Person : and to speak them with Effect to the Poor of our neighbouring Island, that *forsaking the Follies* of their Ancestors, they may *live* as Men ought ; *and go in the Way of Understanding*, through the Practice of the Duties, and Enjoyment of the Comforts of this World, to the Happiness of the next, is the whole Intent of the Charity, which we are met to promote : the noblest and greatest of the Kind, that ever existed.

The Kingdom of *Ireland* is blessed by Providence with all the Means of Prosperity : and yet the Bulk of the People are in a Condition very lamentable. With Health and Strength, they have little or no Industry : with Capacities like other Men, they have little or no Knowledge, even of the common Arts of Life. With the best Situation and Opportunities for Commerce, they have scarce any of the Conveniencies which it imports : with a fertile Soil, in a temperate Climate, they have scarce Food and Raiment. Under a Government, which lays on them the fewest Burthens, that perhaps ever Nation felt, they are incessantly wishing for a Change : and, which is the Source of all, though the Light of the Reformation shines round them, and the Door of Christian Freedom is open to them, they continue in thick Darkness, voluntary Slaves to absurd Superstitions. Attached with servile Awe to the lowest Emissaries of the See of *Rome*, they imbibe even the Dregs of its Errors : which many, in other Countries of the same Communion, have the Wisdom to reject. Hence their Idolatry is grosser, their Esteem of social Duties less, their Dependence on outward Formalities more confident, their Enmity to Protestants bitterer : and their Abhorrence of Labour almost insuperable, because it will benefit those, whom they detest.

We ought to pity all the Mistakes and Sufferings of all our Fellow-creatures, and yet
more

more of our Fellow-Christians, how much soever they proceed from their own Faults. Even their temporal Evils ought to move us very sensibly : and though Penury and Nakedness may appear to unaccustomed Eyes more grievous than they are ; yet the real Distresses flowing from them are often extremely heavy. But their spiritual Disadvantages, that they have so little Acquaintance with rational Piety, universal Benevolence, the Value of moral Self-Government, and the genuine System of *the Truth as it is in Jesus* *, these intitle them to much tenderer Compassion, though seldom considered in that View. For our Fellow-Subjects we ought to feel an additional Concern, were their Interests ever so separable from our own : but in the present Case they are united most intimately. While these unhappy Creatures remain without proper Employment, the Country in general must be unhealthy, as well as unpleasant, for want of Culture ; and thinly peopled, for want of Necessaries : the Sight of so much Wretchedness must be painful ; the Relief of it expensive, and nevertheless unavailing. That Part of the *British* Dominions must be destitute of the Wealth and Strength, which Diligence would quickly procure it : and instead of contributing to the Support of the Whole, must drain and exhaust *England* for its Defence, whenever attacked.

* Ephes. iv. 21.

This would be unavoidable, were the Natives ever so amicably disposed towards us, ever so dutifully towards our Sovereign. But being of a different and persecuting Religion; taught by bigotted Parents and Instructors to regard us as Hereticks, abhorred of God; and devoted, by his Vicegerent on Earth, to present, as well as future, Destruction: some of them will think doing Mischief to us, when they can without Hazard, a laudable Action; and others will imagine Fraud, or Perjury, or Violence against such abominable Miscreants, Offences that claim an easy Absolution. These Sentiments must greatly affect their Conduct in the ordinary Intercourses of Life: but unspeakably more, when the Interests of their Church come in Question. Accordingly, for these, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, they were rebelling perpetually: in that of King *Charles I.* they massacred, unprovoked, as many compute, above *One Hundred Thousand* Persons of our Faith: in that of King *James II.* and the War that followed, not only the meaner Sort, but the upper also, gave shocking Proofs of the like inhuman Spirit. By such repeated Enormities, Multitudes of them, on various Occasions, forfeited their Estates with their Lives. These Forfeitures, their Descendants, whilst they cherish the same Way of thinking, must consider as Nullities; and wish and hope to regain what they have lost: pining with Envy, thirsting for Revenge; and imputing their Poverty, the Fruit originally

nally of their Treasons, and since of their Idleness, and Maintenance of Priests without End, to our insupportable Oppressions.

Thus uneasy at Home, vast Numbers of them go Abroad, and chiefly into the Territories of our Enemies or Rivals. There some of them exert themselves in Trade to our Detriment, which they would not do in their own Land for our common Benefit. Some again, who have got Riches already, carry them away to enjoy them elsewhere. But far the greatest Part of these Emigrants take up the Profession of Arms in the Service of Popish Powers; attack us with peculiar Fierceness in the Day of Battle, as we have felt to our Cost; and are always ready, when a critical Juncture shall appear, to return and head their Countrymen against us in another meritorious holy War; which we have the more Cause to apprehend, as their Bishops are nominated by the Pretender; as neither Clergy nor Laity amongst them have ever given, or offered to give, though pressed to it by some of their own Church, any Pledge of their Fidelity to the present Government; and as those Regions of the Island, which they occupy the most entirely, are the nearest to the Continent*.

We

* We have been told indeed by a late Apologist for them (b), that they have, for near 70 Years past, that is, ever since they could not help themselves, been perfectly well affected. But

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(b) *The Case of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, Dublin, 1755.*

We must be allowed therefore to recollect what hath been ; and conclude from thence, what

we can by no means trust, against all Probability, and the Experience of successive Ages, to the bare Word of a nameless Author. And much less can we do it, when a contemporary Author, an Officer of his own Nation and Belief, living amongst our Enemies, where he may speak out with Safety and Applause, treats our happy Establishment as an Usurpation : and frankly declares, that the *Irish* Papists have a settled Antipathy to *Englishmen*, with a strong Attachment to *France*, and the House of *Stuant* (c).

We have also been told by the same Apologist and others, that whatever the Court of *Rome* may have done, the Church of *Rome* hath never patronised Persecution, or Rebellion, or Breach of Oaths or Promises, to introduce or support its Doctrine or Discipline. But if We must be in Danger of these Things, whenever the Court of *Rome*, or its Partisans have Power ; it is but a sorry Consolation to tell us, that the Church of *Rome* hath no Hand in them. And yet whence are we to learn the Tenets of that Church ? Not surely from a few obscure, or at best private Writers : but from the Decrees of her Councils, general and particular, the uniform Determinations of her Popes, the Edicts of her Princes (d), the received Opinions of her Divines ; the constant Practice of her Members, whenever an inviting Opportunity presents itself ; and that Practice not once condemned as unlawful, by any pretended Authority amongst them ; though there have been many and loud Calls upon them to condemn it, if indeed they disapprove it. But they have better Ways than this : they force the most notorious Facts alledged against them, into a Neutrality, if not into their Service, by Misrepresentations : or, if any be intractably stubborn, they pass it over in total Silence. Thus particularly this Apologist, though he relates a Variety of Historical Occurrences, to shew that his Catholick Friends were innocent, or excusable in them all, no more mentions or hints at the horrid Butchery of 1641, than if he had never heard of any such Thing. And the *Irish* Officer, poor Man, hath forgotten it as entirely, in his Narration of Matters, relative to the Papists of that Island : though he remembers a great deal more, than is true, of what preceded,

(c) Lettres d'un Officier Irlandois à un Officier François de ses Amis, Mem. de Trev. Aout, Sept. 1756.

(d) See a Discourse concerning the Laws, Ecclesiastical and Civil, made against Hereticks. London, printed for John W'yatt, 1723.

what will, or may be: to put ourselves, when it is requisite, in the Condition of our Forefathers; adopt their Feelings, to excite our Vigilance, though not our Resentment; and make supplemental Provisions for Security, where the former have proved insufficient.

How they came to be insufficient, needs not be minutely examined here. *Ireland*, remote from the rest of *Europe*, and harassed continually by domestick Feuds, was in a State of great Ignorance and Rudeness at the Reformation. God, *whose Judgments are unsearchable**, raised up then in that Country none of the *burning and shining Lights* †, which he did elsewhere. Popery therefore, while the Attention of *England* was engaged at Home, kept its Ground, and soon fortified it by foreign Schools and Connexions. The first Rebellions indeed, which followed on this, principally weakened the Authors of them: but the dreadful Massacre almost extinguished the Protestants. And though the Perpetrators of it suffered in their Turns very severely: yet the Survivors were buoyed up with Hopes, in the two next Reigns, of recovering all: which they were on the Point of accomplishing, when the Arrival of our Deliverer King *William*, and their unsuccessful Opposition to him,

preceded, and followed it. Treating Persons in this Manner, is really holding their Understandings in too much Contempt: and being almost as void of Judgment, as of Honesty and Shame.

* Rom. xi. 33.

† John v. 35.

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broke their Strength, but not their Obstinacy. However, since that Time, the Persons of Figure have been gradually coming over : some on right Motives ; others in Consequence of such Regulations, as the Legislature can justly make in its own Defence, and Papists can never consistently blame, though wrong Minds may be tempted by them to Hypocrisy. Still, Profelytes on suspected Inducements, and some of them only from the Profession of a false Religion to the Profession of none, are not likely to have much Influence, were they to endeavour it, on their Inferiors : who accordingly have adhered to the *Romish* Communion.

And were they never to quit it, their Priests unquestionably, had they Uprightness and Prudence enough, might give them both better Dispositions to Industry, and juster Notions of Christianity. But there is no Prospect that they ever will, in any great Measure : or should they do their best, the most refined Popery is a dangerous Corruption of the Gospel ; and hath besides a large Mixture of Things hurtful to Civil Society. But especially where a Person of the same Persuasion keeps up a Claim to the Crown, its Votaries will never be further good Subjects, than as their seeming such may procure Connivance at their making Converts, to which they confess themselves indispensably bound : and should they ever make enow, there would be no Peace afterwards,

terwards, unless we and our King became what they would have us.

Therefore, till the Generality of the *Irish* are brought to be Protestants, the *English* are not safe. And doubtless they might have been brought to it, by Gallies and Inquisitions, long ago. *But we have not so learned Christ* *. Our Adversaries can use every Degree of Force: yet protest, on Occasion, indeed at the very Time and Place, if it be needful, that they use none; and inveigh against us for sanguinary Laws, which they have extorted from us by disloyal Practices, and which they know all their Invectives cannot provoke us to execute. *But the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal* †, but spiritual: Instruction, Conviction, Exhortation. Now unhappily the Persons, whose peculiar Office it is to dispense these, are, in all *Ireland*, scarce *Eight Hundred*: a Number vastly inferior, not only to that of the Popish Priests, but to the Necessities even of the present Protestants. Besides, of these few, a large Proportion have no Places of Abode in or near their Parishes. This alone would be a sad Discouragement: but a still worse is, that where Ignorance hath long obtained almost universal Possession, and People are unused to reason, persuading them out of settled Habits of religious Belief and Practice hath Difficulties hardly surmountable; and yet less when the Application is made to

* Eph. iv. 20.

† 2 Cor. x. 4.

them

them by Persons, whom they dislike; but least of all, when hearkening to it for a Moment is prohibited under Penalty of Anathemas, at which they tremble. Attempts have been made: their Language hath been learned on Purpose: and none would or durst give the Preacher a Hearing. Possibly some Clergymen may have been too much disheartened by such Instances. Possibly others, God forgive them, may have been glad to excuse themselves from taking disagreeable Pains. And the Heads of our Church have not an absolute Power over their Inferiors, to send them on what Missions they please, as those of the Church of *Rome* have. How far they have exerted the little, that is left them, I cannot say. But, before either Bishops or Parochial Ministers are vehemently blamed, let the Laity reflect, whether They also may not have been negligent in relation to many of these poor Creatures, who live under their Roofs; and try, what Impression they can make on them. If they succeed, I hope it will beget Emulation: if not, they will be readier to pardon Want of Success, or even Despair, in others: and conclude, that no Method will effectually teach them our Religion, but Education in it.

Were Children taught nothing early, they would know nothing, and be fit for nothing, as long as they lived. But some Principles of Behaviour they will learn: and therefore should
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learn the best, which are those of true Piety. Their Instructors may direct them wrong in that Respect, as well as in others: but still they must give them such Advice for both Worlds, as they think is beneficial; no less than such Food, as they think is wholesome. And if one Lesson be, what is constantly one of ours, *to prove every Thing*, as they become able, *to hold fast that which is Good, and abstain from all Appearance of Evil**: this is a potent Corrective of whatever Mistakes may chance to be infused into them. Without this Corrective, nay, prohibiting it as Poison, the *Romanists* employ the whole Influence of Education to the utmost: and therefore cannot reproach Us, who employ it with such a Restriction. Nor surely can the bitterest Enemies to instilling of Prejudices doubt, which Sort are better. They may wish perhaps, that Children should have no Faith, but a Scorn of it: and they may bring up their own Children thus, and take the Consequences. But Mankind in general must and will have a Religion: and Multitudes are turned or kept Papists, by seeing, that so many pretended Protestants have none. Or supposing the Project feasible in itself, and otherwise unpunished by Providence: yet Morals in private Life, and Order in publick, cannot but decay and be lost, along with the Fear of God.

* 1 Theff v. 21, 22.

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Still, to educate Children in our own Persuasion, against the Will of Fathers or Mothers, would be cruel, though legal; unless, by some overt Act, they lose, or give up, their Claim to educate them; whatever Title the State may have to see, that they are bred loyal and useful Subjects. And therefore our Society takes none away by Authority, but those of vagrant Beggars. Yet our Adversaries, I conceive, would few, if any of them, be so scrupulous as to make that Distinction. And certainly not one of them would question, but young Persons, committed to their Care, might and ought to be instructed in their Creed. Nor, I presume, would they inquire very strictly, what induced the Parent to delegate to them his Right. We induce him, neither by hard Usage, nor Menaces, nor Rewards, nor Promises: but only propose to him the Benefit of his Child. And Nature enjoins him to promote even its worldly Benefit in every lawful Manner. His Priests indeed may tell him, this Manner is unlawful. But that, and many other Assertions of theirs, of which some appear at first Sight very strange ones, are flatly contradicted by Numbers of Persons, as wise, as learned, seemingly as solicitous too about their own eternal Happiness. He hath no solid Grounds to prefer the Opinion of the former to that of the latter. And therefore in this Uncertainty, though he may resolve for himself not to change Sides, break his old Connexions, and make his old Friends uneasy :
yet

yet why should he not intrust a Son or a Daughter with those, who will both provide better for their temporal Interests, and qualify them to judge better about their religious ones, than He can?

Whatever their Reasonings may be, the Fact is, that Popish Parents are willing to send their Children to the newly erected Charter-Schools: and more are likely to become willing. The Reproach of it must wear off with the Novelty: the Stories of their bad Treatment there have been disproved, as fast as they have been raised: and, I believe, the Priests have often found it their Wisdom not to overstretch their Authority in this Case, for Fear of weakening it in all. But granting, that these Houses cannot be always quite filled with the Offspring of Papists, which however make in all of them vastly the Majority; yet the Admission of Orphans or Vagrants, who else would fall into the Hands of Papists, hath the same good Effect. And were now and then a few, whose Parents are known Protestants, to be received: no one, who approves either our common Charity-Schools, or that great Charity-School, the Foundling-Hospital, could fail to be pleased even with this Branch of the Management; especially considering, how well the whole is conducted.

The particular Rules cannot be specified here: but one there is, of great Extent and

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Importance; which would God were observed in this Nation; combining Instruction with Labour. The first Part of Instruction, to such as need it, is teaching them *English*: for till they understand that competently, their only Inlet of Knowledge is from the Priests and their Followers. They learn also somewhat of Writing and Arithmetick, which are of Use in the lowest Occupations: and more of Reading; for the good Books, which are put into their Hands, when they go away, may contribute greatly to fix them in true Religion. Of this, the plain Doctrines and practical Precepts are taught them, with necessary Preservatives against Popish Errors: a Proceeding no less prudent, than conscientious. For were they instructed in gainful Arts, but the Notions of their Fathers left to grow up in them, it might cause in Time a dangerous Accession to the Property of that Interest. And were those Notions to be rooted out, and no better planted; Labour without Religion, will generally, as soon as ever it enriches, if not before, give place to Idleness, Dissoluteness, and all Sorts of Crimes: whereas Diligence from a Principle of Piety will go on, providing for Descendants, for Relations, for the Poor; and teaching them all to provide, in their Turns, for such as belong to them.

But the Book-Learning of these Children takes up only two Hours of their Day: the rest they spend in Work. And so much of the

the Boys Work, as can, is Agriculture, for their Nourishment and Clothing: together with some Rudiments of Planting and Gardening. Thus every School is a little Farm: and helps to raise Emulation in the most necessary of all Business, of which the Example and the Skill is peculiarly wanting in *Ireland*. Besides this, both Sexes learn those Kinds of Manufacture, especially the Linnen, for which there is like to be a Demand: and such Qualifications, as are requisite for common Servants; Protestant Servants being, on many Accounts, highly valuable. The Earnings of the Scholars, by the Things which they make or do for others, are, in most Foundations, given to the Master or Mistress, as Part of their Salary: an admirable Way of securing the Children's Industry.

If still it be imagined, that they might do more: Inquiry and Observation will gradually suggest every where the Means to that End. But they are put out, as soon as their Labour is worth having: for the Design is not to get Money for the Schools by them; but to supply that Nation with the quickest Succession possible of Protestant Workmen. If, notwithstanding, the Expence of the Charity be thought immoderate; it should be recollected, that the mere Building and fitting up so many new Fabricks, must be a heavy Burthen, which will cease in Time. And two or three have been more sumptuous, than needed; but at

324 *A Sermon preached before the*
the Charge of the Persons, who desired it, not of the Society : and Care hath been taken of late to obviate all Pretence for that Complaint. Another Consideration is, that the Children must be removed to a Distance from their Parents, and their Priests : else the latter, at least, would be perpetually tampering with them : and this Precaution costs a great deal. They must also be entirely maintained : else they would not be sent. But the Food and Cloathing of each, over and above the Produce of their Labour, is only about Fifty Shillings a Year ; surely a small Charge for so excellent a Purpose : besides that the whole Money, laid out, circulates in the Neighbourhood.

When their Schooling is completed, they are all apprenticed : and, which shews in what Esteem they are held, nothing hath been given with them for several Years past. As many go out to Husbandry, as Persons will employ that Way : more cannot. None, for some Time, have been put to Sea : partly because it seems better at present, that they should people their own Country with well-disposed Inhabitants, than be consumed in Voyages ; and partly also, because a false Rumour, industriously propagated, of their being transported, for Slaves, to remote Regions, hath raised so wild a Suspicion, that they, who are transplanted from one Part of the Island to another, must all be conveyed by
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Land, to disprove it. They are placed only in Protestant Families: and when they leave them, have a Bounty of Five Pounds from the Society, on their marrying Protestants: it being generally found, that when either Party, especially the Wife, is a Papist, the other is perverted by the Help of the Priest; or however, the Children are educated in that Persuasion. I wish the Laity, Men and Women, of our Communion, were equally assiduous, and equally assisted by their Ministers.

It hath been affirmed, that after all the Care, said to be taken, most of these Children relapse. And at first many did: who yet must not only have been made usefuller in Civil Society by what they learnt, but, one should think, must also feel some Gratitude for the Improvements, which they had received; and dislike our Religion the less, the more they knew of it. But however that might be, I am assured, on particular Inquiry, that now, since the Method of transplanting hath been followed, extremely few have become Apostates. Indeed why should not Habit alone operate as powerfully in our Favour, as against us? And why should not young People, thus grounded, see the Reasonableness, and feel the Amiability of Protestantism, especially when compared with gross *Irish* Popery, so strongly, as to be more likely, when grown up, to bring over others, than be

brought over by them? Why, in particular, may not their affectionate Remonstrances and Behaviour, assisted by the tender Workings of Nature in their Behalf, prevail, sooner or later, on their ignorant Parents, to *forfake the Foolish, and live, and go in the Way of Understanding?*

Still it hath been said by some, that at best the Progress of the Design is too slow, to produce any material Alteration. And we own, that for some Time it was almost imperceptible. Several Years must pass, before a single Child could be sent from the Schools: and several more, before one could act for himself. Nay, since that, we have not advanced so fast, as might be wished: no good Design ever doth. Nor indeed is over great Haste advisable. A new Establishment cannot prudently be made any where, till Proposals, reasonably advantageous, are offered; and a Committee fixed, of trusty and active Persons, in the Neighbourhood, to superintend it: which, in the midst of Papists, where it is most needed, is hardest to be found. However, it is no inconsiderable Thing, after all, in so short a Space to have had One thousand five hundred Children put Apprentices, and above One thousand six hundred more now actually instructing. Were only the same Number to be kept up, it would augment, without ceasing, the Inclination of the Balance to our Side: and at length the Scale must

must turn. But every Year hath brought an Increase: and, we may justly hope, will bring a greater. The good Consequences of the Undertaking will be more evident: these very Scholars will, many of them, become Masters of Families, and take Servants from the Schools; become rich, and contribute to support, to enlarge, to multiply them. And they, who, by objecting that we make little Speed, are one main Cause of our making less than we should otherwise, ought by liberal Benefactions to compensate for past Discouragements, and assist us in proceeding quicker.

No one surely will affect to disapprove, lest he should be obliged to subscribe. No one can be barbarous enough to desire the Continuance of poor Wretches in Error and Helplessness, that he may tyrannize over them with Impunity. No one can bear so determined an Ill-will, either to Religion, as to favour the Profession of theirs, because it is an absurd one: or to the Clergy, as to oppose the forming of these Children into rational Creatures and good Subjects, because They contrived and executed the Plan for it; which ought to be deemed, on the contrary, great Amends for any supposed former Neglects. No wonder, if the Project, before it took Place, were treated by many as chimerical: but now, Fact hath demonstrated both its Practicableness and its Utility. Proposals indeed may be offered for amending it in some Parts; though

the unexperienced ought to offer them with much Diffidence : but really, for Objections against the Whole there is no Room left. Both the Scheme and the Conduct of it have been more universally applauded by the *Irish* Protestants in general, who must be Judges of the Improvement, to which they are Eye-witnesses, than ever any Thing of the Kind was before in any Country. Successive Lords Lieutenants have unanimously recommended it to our gracious Sovereign : who, with equal Generosity and Wisdom, prevented the imminent Ruin of it in its Infancy, eighteen Years ago ; and hath upheld it ever since, by an annual Donation of a Thousand Pounds, and occasional ones amounting to sixteen Thousand more. The Parliament of *Ireland* also, in Concurrence with the King, have settled on it the Produce of a new Tax ; valuable in itself, and doubly so as a Testimonial of the Sentiments of the Legislature. Nay, the very Papists have acknowledged the Efficacy of our Schools, by setting up others of their own in Competition with them. And so far as they may do any Good, we are glad to be the Occasion of it : but we must counteract the Hurt, which they may do, by a redoubled Zeal for what they are aiming to defeat.

Indeed this Charity is a publick Concern of both Nations, not only in a religious, but a political View. It relieves present Distresses, which always endanger the Quiet of a State,
more

more or less ; and prevents those of Generations to come. In Proportion as it spreads, the Country will be more civilized, more cultivated, more populous, more wealthy. These Children will stay at home : and not run abroad to settle in Popish Lands, which hitherto the Sameness of Belief hath made so agreeable to the Inhabitants of that Country. By their Industry, and the good Fruits of it, they will stir up Emulation in all of their own Rank. By their Conviction of the Truth of Protestantism, they will be satisfied, that the Forfeitures of their Predecessors, in the two last Centuries, for their many rebellions in support of the opposite Cause, were deserved. They will be thoroughly disunited from those, whom they have renounced ; will love their Masters for being of the same Faith with them ; and stand up for the Defence of it, on trying Occasions, in Word and Deed. But further, even the Papists of *Ireland* will have Reason given them, by these Schools, to think well of their Protestant Neighbours, and of the Clergy in particular. Their Priests have suffered them to languish for Ages in Ignorance, Hunger and Nakedness : we bestow on them Knowledge and Plenty. To Them they owe the Guilt of their Insurrections and Massacres, the Misery of their Attainders and Confiscations : to Us they will owe the Blessing of being humanized and enriched.

Now

Now of all these Advantages, *Britain* must partake. The Wealth of that People will not only, in loyal Hands, render them a strong Barrier to us, but will circulate continually from the Extremes to the Heart of Empire. Along with that, we shall gain a still more desirable Treasure, their good Opinion. They will plainly perceive, that we neither hate nor despise them : that if we find it needful to restrain their Industry in some Things, we excite, aid and direct it in others ; and zealously encourage what evidently conduces to their present, and, we are persuaded, to their future Happiness also. Then, as our Undertaking succeeds, we shall have those, if wanted, for Protestant Soldiers in our own Troops, who else would be Popish ones in the Service of our foreign Adversaries : and we shall no longer be over-run, as we are, in this Metropolis, in its Suburbs, in our Eastern and our Western Settlements, with *Irish* Catholics, as they call themselves, to an Amount, which few of us imagine ; and at which all of us, if we knew it, would be justly alarmed. Our Religion is losing Ground on the Continent : we have so much more need to be compact, and of one Mind, at home. It is losing Ground even amongst ourselves : and God give those Attention to the Danger, who ought to guard us against it. But such Care no way interferes with an Attempt of making Reprials ; and carrying the War, by means of these
Schools,

Schools, into our Enemies Head-Quarters. If we conquer them there, we shall have much less Cause to be afraid of them here. The Supply will be cut off: on the Residue of the Party like Methods will produce like Effects. And when once they are produced, the Inhabitants of the *British* Isles and Colonies will all have the same Friends and Foes: our Fellow-Subjects, whose Eye is now evil against us, will not only *for their Brethren and Companions Sakes wish us Prosperity, but because of the House of the Lord our God will seek to do us Good* *. Our Civil and Ecclesiastical Community will, in Comparison with their present State, *look forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners* †.

What then remains, but that so worthy a Design be vigorously executed: that we contribute to it, according to our Ability; and move others to contribute, according to our Influence? The Protestants of *Ireland* are doubtless most immediately concerned to exert themselves. And yet the printed Accounts from thence intimate, what else we should be cautious of saying, that all Persons there have not been so bountiful as they should. For some Years, the main Support was from *England*. And since that, of the *Irish* Subscriptions, those of the Bishops make towards one third: and, together with those of the Clergy,

* Pf. cxxii. 8, 9.

† Cant. vi. 10.

near

near one half. Yet the Utility is general : and the Laity have a much more durable Interest in their Estates, than the Clergy have in theirs ; and a larger Interest, even in most Church Estates, than Churchmen themselves. It is not strange however, if they judged, that these ought to stand foremost in the Work : if they saw more Difficulties on the Spot, than We here could discern at a Distance ; and were held back, somewhat too long, by Doubts of Success. Besides, though the stated Subscriptions of that Country are smaller, than might be expected ; they far exceed ours : their Presents and Legacies have risen to no inconsiderable Sum : and many, instead of Money, have given Lands. The original Formation of the Scheme too is altogether owing to the *Irish* : on Them also hath lain the Care and Labour of carrying it into Execution : superintending every School, and conducting the whole Machine, from the Beginning to this Day : without which, ever so great Liberalities from Us would have been thrown away, and sunk intirely.

Therefore, whilst we remind them, that, both in Conscience and Honour, they should take on themselves a due Share of what primarily belongs to them ; let us remember how much they have taken : and though we should think it not enough ; let us rather try to win upon our Brethren by gentle Representations, and engaging Examples of Beneficence, than
reproach

reproach any of them unkindly; and yet resemble them in that Deficiency, for which we blame them. Their Esteem and Affection is well worth purchasing at a much dearer Rate: for we purchase consequentially Strength and Quiet to ourselves. We were once in the same State of Blindness and Bondage, that the poor Wretches of that Island are: let us express our Gratitude to God for freeing Us from it, by endeavouring to free Them. We have been known to them chiefly hitherto by our Victories and just Severities: let us now shew them our compassionate Bounty; and thus acquaint them with the true Genius of Protestantism. We have been commonly traduced amongst them, as destitute of Religion: let us take this amiable Method of confuting the Imputation. We are wealthy; They are indigent: let us prove our Wealth to them in the most reputable, the most useful Manner. We send much of it continually to Nations unrelated, ill affected to us, for Things which do us no Good, but Harm: let us strike off a few Articles yearly from our Vanity and Luxury; employ the Savings to advance genuine Piety, Loyalty and Industry, in our Sister Island: and so benefit ourselves and her at once. We of the Clergy ought *in all things to shew ourselves Patterns of good Works**: and surely then for the Service of Religion, of the Protestant Religion, of a People so nearly allied to us. Amongst our Laity also, unto

* Tit. ii. 7.

334 *A Sermon preached before the*
whomsoever much is given, of him shall much
be required *, on all fitting Occasions. And
there ought to be in every Man, though pos-
sessed only of moderate Fortunes, *a willing*
Mind, according to that he hath †. But how-
ever excusable many such may be; they who
are sprung from *Ireland*, certainly ought to
distinguish themselves in forwarding this Cha-
rity: their Relation demands it of them.
They, who have Estates there, or Incomes of
any Sort arising from thence, should be liberal
to it, beyond others, who have no such Con-
nexions. For it is natural to be generous pe-
culiarly in the Place, from which their Capa-
city of being generous proceeds. And the
more their Circumstances and Stations point
out to them to reside in that Place; if they do
not, the more ample Amends they should
make it some other Way: besides that what
is expended there to encourage Labour and
Liberty, will ere long greatly encrease the
Produce, the Rent, the Value of each Persons
Lands.

These Considerations are laid before you,
solely for your cool Reflexion in Retirement.
No Advantage will be taken of any sudden
Impression, which they may possibly make
now; or of the Willingness to give, or Shame
to refuse, that might accompany the social
Meal, which is to follow our present Assem-
bly. This is treating you with singular Deli-

* Luke xii. 48.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12.

cacy and Respect. Certainly it will not fail of moving you to the proper Return, of such voluntary deliberate Donations, yearly or occasional, as best evidence a free Heart. Where they will be received, is publickly advertised.

But then, whilst we join with our Friends of that Kingdom in what we can both do, we must rely on them absolutely for what Inspectors alone can do. Much Praise, we are sensible, they have merited on that Account, from the highest to the lowest. We can only exhort them, and we know they will *suffer the Word of Exhortation, to abound more and more**: to re-examine frequently the Plan, and see what may be corrected or improved in it; the Management, and see what may insensibly have gone wrong, or been relaxed: to hear Objections attentively and candidly, both from Approvers and Disapprovers of the Scheme; for amongst the latter may be Persons of Consequence and of Value, though under the Dominion of Prejudices: to rectify or vindicate Things, as the Case requires; and *not let their Good be evil spoken of*†. The Choice of Masters and Mistresses for the Schools is a most essential Article of their Trust. These ought never to be taken from Motives of Self-Interest, Importunity, Compassion, Cheapness; or any other, than a well-grounded Persuasion, that they are qualified,

* Heb. xiii. 22, 1 Thess. iv. 1.

† Rom. xiv. 16.

by their serious and practical Faith in the Protestant Religion, their Skill and Diligence, their Spirit and Temper, to teach the Children, committed to them, their Duty to God and the King, together with the Means of getting an honest Livelihood. For neither of these, without the other, will suffice. But as keeping them to Work may be more for the private Emolument of the Master or Mistress, than principling them well; and a Failure in the former is more easily perceived: there must be a closer Watchfulness over the latter. Yet they are not to be taught an uncharitable Vehemence against Papists, like theirs against Us; much less an Imagination, that such Bitterness is Religion enough: but a fervent Affection for the Doctrines and Precepts of primitive Christianity, with a conscientious Dread of *making either of none Effect through the Commandments and Traditions of Men* *. At the same Time, whatever Indulgence, whatever Appearance, may exalt them, either in Reality, or but in Fancy, beyond their due Rank, is to be prohibited most peremptorily. If Knowledge of Accounts, or even of Writing, will tempt them to think they are above the meanest Business: they had much better have little or none of it imparted to them. And in all Respects they should be brought up so, as will induce them to look upon their subsequent Apprenticeship in the Light of a Preferment.

* Mark vii. 7, 13. Col. ii. 8.

For preserving the Institution in this Vigour, it will be extremely material to keep a frequent Correspondence, entring into Particulars, with the local Committee of every School; to compare the Management of one with another, diffuse the Notice of whatever good Oeconomy hath been any where introduced; and recommend it to all, who can properly make Trial of it. Once * a prudent and experienced Person was sent to visit a considerable Part of these Foundations: to examine their State, and propose Diminutions of Expences, Improvements of their Lands, useful Regulations of various Kinds. Possibly a Repetition of this Practice, at moderate Intervals, with a Report to the Committee at *Dublin* of what had appeared on the Inquiry, might have more good Consequences, than can be at present distinctly foreseen.

In putting the Children out, it is of the utmost Moment, that the Persons, who take them, be not only nominal Protestants, but real Christians. For indeed they had better turn Papists again, than become such Profligates, as the Examples and common Talk, it may be feared, of some Families would make them. They had better think wrong in several Articles of Religion, than scorn the Whole: and be ready to do Mischief in particular Points occasionally, than in all constantly. But one would contrive most studiously to

* In the Year 1746.

secure them from both : and for that Purpose, if possible, not to place them with Popish Fellow-Servants ; at least without a Mixture of others. And if those who are intrusted with them, would but have the Goodness to bestow some peculiar Attention on their moral and religious Conduct, it might often prevent the Loss of all that had been done before : and both they, and the rest of their House, as well as the poor Children, would be the better for it.

The Priests, we are told, pursue them to the remotest Corners of the Island, in Hopes of recovering them. Surely then We should be as anxious to retain them. But above all, the Ministers of their Parishes ought to eye them without Intermision ; inculcate upon them the most earnest Cautions not to discredit their Education ; and engage them in the firmest Promises, whenever they are attacked, either in Point of Doctrines or Duties, to apply for Help from Them immediately. Our Adversaries obtain and perpetuate their Influence over their People, by having much Intercourse with them, by letting themselves down to them. *They are wise in their Generation* *. If we hope to be a Match for them, we must imitate them. And then, as They act thus partly for their own private Ends, and We can do it only out of Kindness, we shall so far have the Advantage. Not for this Rea-

* Luke xvi. 8.

son only, but for many more, Ministers ought to reside in their Parishes, and *sow Spiritual Things where they reap Carnal* *. The Legislature ought first to make Provision for Residence in a sufficient Number of Places, then to require it. And mere personal Abode, with a legal Performance of stated Offices, ought by no Means to be regarded as the Substance of parochial Duty. It is not a formal and indolent, much less a gay and voluptuous, but a self-denying, condescending, pains-taking Clergy, that will do Good: who are *instant in Season and out of Season* †: who *knowing the Terrors of the Lord, persuade Men* ‡ to avoid them; who loving his Promises, invite Men to partake of them. Now, if the Laity would have such Pastors as these, they must prefer and recommend such, discountenancing others. And if they would have the Labours of these effectual, they must permit them to have a due Effect upon themselves. Else our Religion will be reproached and blasphemed for their Sakes: which, would they observe its Rules, we might hope to see honoured and embraced. For it is remarkable, that in those Counties of *Ireland*, where Protestants are strictest, Papists are fewest.

But then, if whilst We in *England* say these Things to our Neighbours over the Water, we set them a Pattern of doing the contrary; if our Laity are profane, if our Clergy are

* 1 Cor. ix. 11.

† 2 Tim. iv. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 11.

340 *A Sermon preached before the, &c.*

supine: we shall exhort Them with an ill Grace and small Success. Therefore let Us begin to amend, and there will be some Prospect of Their following. Or if They begin, let Us think it more Honour to copy them in what is right, than to lead them in what is wrong. And God grant we may Both *consider one another, to provoke unto Love and good Works; and so much the more, as we see the Day approaching**: too probably the Day of national Calamity, unless we avert it by a speedy Reformation; but certainly the Day of Death, and that awful *Account*, which *every one shall give of himself to God* †.

* Heb. x. 4, 25:

† Rom. xiv. 12.

S E R M O N XIII.

Preached in the Parish-Church of St.
Mary, Lambeth, Nov. 5, 1758.

J O H N xvi. 2, 3.

*They shall put you out of the Synagogues: yea,
the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you,
will think, that he doth God Service.*

*And these Things will they do unto you, because
they have not known the Father, nor me.*

THE various Evils of human Life are, all of them, just Matter of serious and melancholy Consideration: but each in its due Proportion and Degree. Such of them, as flow of Necessity from that Order of Things, which Providence established in Consequence of Man's original Transgression, are undoubtedly very heavy and afflicting: Labour, Pain, Sicknefs, Death; whether befalling Us, or our Friends. But a great Alleviation of them is, that God inflicts them on us, not Man; and uses them to serve excellent Purposes, of teaching us Resignation to Himself, and Compassion to each other; of weaning us from this World, and exciting in our Hearts earnest Desires of a

better. So that these Calamities, being a wholesome, though rough, Exercise of our Virtue and Piety, may be considered, in this View, with Comfort enough. But such as proceed from our own mutual Injuries, though even these *work together for Good to them that love God**, are a Ground for much deeper Concern: for here is Guilt, as well as Suffering: Mankind not only multiplying present Torments, very needlessly, one to another, but treasuring up future and eternal ones to themselves: defeating, as far as Creatures are able, the gracious Designs of the Creator of all; and turning his World into the very contrary of what he intended it should be.

Well might one have hoped, that our natural Principles of Humanity, at least of Religion, would have so far restrained us, that Evils of this Kind, if they existed at all, should not be frequent, or extreme. But early and general Experience hath too fully confuted such Imaginations. However, when Revelation came in to the Aid of Reason, giving so much clearer Notice of our Duty, and stronger Motives to it; one should firmly have expected, that the Voice of God, speaking expressly from Heaven, must have produced a general and a lasting Reformation. But, instead of this, a new Gloom arises from hence, to make our View still more discouraging. We see revealed Religion, as well as natural, profess-

* Rom. viii. 28.

edly scorned by many, and seriously regarded by very few. Yet, though it hath but little Influence, were all that Influence good, there would still be some Joy. But to have the very *Light, which is in us, become Darkness**; and what was calculated, beyond all Things, to make us good and happy, perverted to make us wicked and miserable, this completes the Sorrow.

Yet so it is: *the Gold itself is become dim; the most fine Gold changed*†. The Piety of the patriarchal Ages degenerated very early into pernicious Idolatries, full of Rites impure and barbarous. And no sooner almost were the *Jews* reformed effectually from the Worship of false Gods, than their Zeal for the true one became, by Degrees, so blind and fierce, that the Condition of many of them might seem not to be extremely altered for the better. Towards the Heathen, and one another, indeed their Bitterness might usually defend itself by the Plea of antecedent Provocation: but their Treatment of Christianity, when it appeared, was void of all Excuse. That perfectly benevolent Doctrine, recommended to them by every Instance of unmixed Goodness attending its Delivery, if it had not Charms enough to attract their Love, had surely nothing to excite their Hatred. Yet such was the Turn of this perverse Nation, that even their own Messiah, *the Hope of Israel*‡, con-

* Matth. vi. 23.

† Lam. iv. 1.

‡ Acts xxviii. 20.

tradicting their favourite Scheme, of devoutly indulging their Lusts, and piously tyrannizing over the rest of the World; they crucified Him, and pursued his Followers, with that inhuman Bigotry, which, in the Words of the Text, he foretold they would.

Nor did this wicked Spirit actuate Them alone: but the Heathens also, who had borne, for the most Part, very patiently, with the infinite Variety of one anothers Gods; who had long borne with the *Jewish* Religion, as opposite to all their own, as could be; yet persecuted the Christians with a most barbarous Rage, for three hundred Years: till at length, triumphing over Cruelty with mere Patience and Innocence, it gradually became the established Belief of the *Roman* Empire.

And then, at least, would a compassionate Spectator of the Course of this World, tired out with the Sins and Miseries of it, have surely thought, the Time must be come now, to *lift up his Head**, and rejoice in the happy Change. For who could possibly imagine, that the Professors of so merciful a Religion, especially after experiencing so long the Evil of Persecution themselves, would ever be brought to exercise it on their own Brethren. *But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be* †? The Wisdom of God foresaw

* Luke xxi. 28.

† Matth. xxvi. 54.

and

and foretold, what could not but seem to the first Disciples very incredible in itself, that, by quick Degrees, their Successors would bring into the Christian Church almost all the Corruptions, which they had heard their Master condemn in the *Jewish*: human Additions to the Law of God; human *Traditions*, that *made it of no Effect* *; dishonest Zeal to gain Profelytes; implacable Resentment against all, who differed from them.

Too soon, and too wide, did these Offences spread among the professed Followers of Christ: and would God any Part of them were quite innocent, that ever had the Power of being guilty. But unspeakably the deepest Root did this Evil take in the See of *Rome*: which begun surprizingly early to verify of itself one Part of our Saviour's Words, by *putting out of the Synagogue*, excommunicating, or at least attempting to excommunicate, without Cause, the Churches of *Asia*, in the Controversy of Easter: and employed afterwards, at some Times the Dignity of the Imperial Seat, at others the Reverence of a principal apostolick Foundation, to obtain continually fresh Accessions of Power; till at length a Bishop of that See in the seventh Century † assumed the Title, which his almost immediate Predecessor ‡ had declared to be a Mark of Antichrist; that of the Universal Pastor of Christ's

* Matth. xv. 6. Mark vii. 13.

‡ Gregory the First.

† Boniface the Third.

Church.

Church. And his Successors took effectual Care, that it should be fed with such Doctrines most diligently, as were most subservient to their wicked Designs. All, who opposed any of their Novelties, but especially any new Claim of Authority, they prosecuted with infinitely greater Vehemence, than if guilty of the grossest Immoralities: and not only subjected them to the utmost Rigour of spiritual Censures, but to the heaviest temporal Penalties that they could; and, at length, to Death itself.

Even over Princes, in process of Time, was this unwarrantable Dominion extended; and having often been exercised in fact, was in the last Place openly asserted, as a just Right. For the fourth Council of *Lateran*, held in the Year 1215, and pretended to be a general, and therefore infallible one, after beginning with a Creed, of which Transubstantiation, then first established, made a Part; proceeds, in the third Canon, to decree, “ that
“ all Deniers of that, or any other of the
“ [pretended] Catholick Doctrines, be excom-
“ municated, and punished by the secular Arm:
“ that all, who are suspected, unless they clear
“ themselves within a Year, be deemed Here-
“ ticks; and that all civil Powers, of what
“ Rank soever, be admonished, and, if Need
“ require, compelled by ecclesiastical Censures,
“ to swear, that they will extirpate all Here-
“ ticks out of their Territories: and if any of
“ them

“ them refuses it, that he also be excommuni-
“ cated ; and if he give not Satisfaction with-
“ in a Year, the Pope shall declare his Sub-
“ jects to be free from their Oath of Fidelity,
“ and give his Dominions to Catholicks ;
“ who driving Heresy out of them, may pos-
“ sess them without Contradiction, and pre-
“ serve them in the Purity of the Faith.”
These are the Words of that Canon. Nay fur-
ther still ; the same Council gives to all, who,
taking upon them the Badge of the Cross, shall
fight against Hereticks, the same spiritual Pri-
vileges and Indulgences, as if they fought a-
gainst Infidels. For making War on the latter,
merely for the Sake of their Religion, though
a most unchristian Employment, they had al-
ready, for selfish Ends, taught to be merito-
rious. And having now raised fighting against
the former to the same Degree of Merit, they
soon effected the Destruction not only of the
Albigenses, a very blameable Sect, but of the
poor *Waldenses* likewise, much better Believers
than themselves ; thus fulfilling the second Part
of our Saviour’s Prediction, *Yea, the Time*
cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think,
that he doth God Service.

After these Beginnings, the Instances, that
followed, of Popish Usurpation, Treachery
and Cruelty, in every Nation of *Europe*, every
Nation upon Earth, in which Popery hath got
Footing, have been so numerous, that the Time
would fail me even to name them : and there-
fore

fore I shall confine myself to a general mention of such, as have happened in a Country, which, God be thanked, hath felt much less of them, than many others; I mean our own. And this I shall do without Bitterness, far from exaggerating any one Fact, or dwelling with the least Pleasure on Things so dishonourable to the Christian Profession; and much too mournful to be remembered, if it were safe to forget them.

No sooner * had King *Henry* the Eighth been declared, what he undoubtedly was, the supreme Head of the Clergy as well as Laity, in his own Kingdom; but, though he had meddled with no one Point of the *Romish* Doctrine besides; nay, was so far from being a Protestant, that all his Life long he burnt others for being so; yet Pope *Paul* the Third pronounced him, by a Bull, to have forfeited his Crown, required all his Subjects to revolt from him; and all Christian Kings to make War upon him. And in fact this produced some dangerous Insurrections, both in his Reign, and that of his Son *Edward* the Sixth; under whom no Papist was put to Death on Account of Religion, excepting such as rebelled on Account of it. How destructive to Protestants the short Reign of his Sister Queen

* The following Facts are chiefly taken from *Foulis's History of Romish Treasons*, fol. 1673, a Discourse concerning the Original of the Powder Plot, 4to. 1674, and a Book intitled, *The Gunpowder Treason*, republished, with a Preface by Bishop *Barlow*, 8vo, 1679.

Mary was, notwithstanding their raising her to the Throne, and notwithstanding her solemn Promises to them, we all know. Yet, in the first ten Years of her Successor Queen *Elizabeth*, not one Papist, not one of the Persecutors, suffered; but all enjoyed quietly the private Exercise of their own Worship. Indeed almost all of them conformed publicly to the established Church; till, in her eleventh Year, Pope *Pius* the Fifth forbid it; and finding his secret Designs ineffectual, commanded, by a Bull, the whole Nation to rebel against her; and denounced a Curse against all, that should obey her: which Order of his a daring Traitor published in the City of *London*; and receiving for it the Reward, which he deserved, is the first Martyr, of whom the *Romanists* have to boast in her Reign: for a real Martyr they account him. And the famous *Thuanus*, a *French* Historian of their own Communion, having called this Man's Deed a rash Action; even so gentle a Censure was ordered by the Court of *Rome* to be struck out of his Book.

Immediately after this, they began to separate from the Church, and rebel against the State: and though very unsuccessful, yet held themselves bound by the Pope's Anathema to rebel on; till his Successor, *Gregory* the Thirteenth, pitying the Dangers, to which they had exposed themselves, for ten Years together, gave them at length a Permission in
Form

Form to be quiet ; provided it were no longer, than till the abovementioned Bull could be openly executed. In the mean while, another Method was taken, of private Attempts to murder the Queen. Many such there were; and almost all of them encouraged by the Confessors of the Wretches, who engaged in them : particularly by those of that new invented Order, which hath profanely distinguished, by the Name of the meek and holy *Jesus*, the most bloody and faithless Combination of Men, whom the Sun ever beheld; among whose fundamental Constitutions it is, that whatever their Superior commands, they shall always think lawful; and renouncing blindly their own Judgment, receive the Word, that comes out of his Mouth, as that of Christ himself. This is that Society, which one of themselves, Father *Campion*, in a Letter to Queen *Elizabeth's* Council, declares, have entered into a Covenant, to destroy, by all Methods they can, all Heretick Princes; in which, he says, they will persist, so long as one of them remains in Being. And this Man also, being executed here for Treason, is reputed by his Brethren a Martyr.

No Wonder, if in such a State of Things, at length severe Laws were made. None such had been made in the first twelve Years of the Queen's Reign : nor was it capital for Priests to be in *England*, till the twenty-seventh : when the better Sort, even of themselves, acknowledged

knowledge the Treasons of the rest to have deserved it. After this, fresh Attempts followed; the Spanish Invasion, and the *Irish* Rebellion, both excited and blessed by the Pope: besides Endeavours to raise Insurrections here; in which *Garnet*, the Superior of the *English* Jesuits, was deeply concerned: to whom, as himself owned, Orders were sent by the Pope, forbidding all Catholicks to admit any Person for King, on the Queen's Death, however near in Blood, unless he would swear to promote their Cause to the utmost of his Power. But failing of Success, he procured a Pardon from King *James* for all his past Treasons, and then immediately proceeded to commit new ones.

For in the first Year of that Monarch's Reign was the execrable Design of this Day formed, though Accidents deferred its Execution. He, in the mean Time, permitted no Severity against Papists, excepting two Priests who suffered for a treasonable Plot; spoke favourably of them to his Parliament, honoured several of them with Access to his Person, with Knighthood; with Regards, that made some of his Protestant Subjects jealous. Yet did not all this hinder the Conspirators from pursuing steadily the most shocking Design, that ever entered into the Heart of Man. A small Scruple indeed some of them had; that a few of their own Communion must have died with the rest. But this was soon

soon removed by their Confessors; and the holy Sacrament made the Bond of so horrid an Impiety. Measures were concerted for an Insurrection at home, for an Invasion from abroad to support it: Prayers offered up, both here and at *Rome*, for the Success of their Enterprize: which a good Providence discovered, but a few Hours before it was to have been executed. Then they broke out into a desperate Attempt of an open Rebellion, in which some of them perished; some, that were taken, gloried in their Design to the last: others indeed condemned themselves: and a great Part of their Communion condemn them now, as is the usual Fate of unsuccessful Treasons. Yet *Garnet*, who was executed for it, and owned himself privy to it, passes amongst them for a Saint and Martyr. *Tesmond*, another Jesuit concerned in it, escaping to *Rome*, was made Penitentiary to the Pope: who himself, as one of the same Order affirms, was acquainted with the Design, and had proper Bulls ready to issue on the Success of it.

After this Discovery, alarming as it was, the most moderate Counsels were taken; and an Oath formed, to distinguish the better Sort of them from the rest: in which they were only to engage, that notwithstanding any Bull or Dispensation from the Pope, they would bear true Faith and Allegiance to the King. Many amongst them took this: but immediately what they had done was condemned

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at *Rome*: *Blackwell*, their Archpriest here, was deprived of his Dignity, for being one of them: and all Catholicks were commanded absolutely to suffer Death, if Need were, rather than take the Oath.

In the Reign of King *Charles* the First, the same Prohibition was repeated: and the *Irish* Massacre of so many thousand Protestants, in cold Blood, gave a new Proof of Popish Treachery and Inhumanity. With a very ill Grace did they pretend, after this, to distinguish themselves for good Subjects in the two next Reigns: when, to pass over the Popish Plot in the former, the Conduct of the latter too fully shewed, at what Point all this boasted Loyalty was aimed. They had perverted that unhappy Prince, King *James* the Second, to an enthusiastick Zeal for their Faith, and of consequence for restoring it here. In vain did he take the most solemn Oaths to maintain our Religion and Liberties. He could not prevail on himself to put on the Appearance of keeping them, even for a few Years: but invaded the whole Constitution with such hasty Steps to its Ruin, that our Fathers beheld Popery rushing instantly upon them, armed with all the Terrors of arbitrary Power; and, besides the ancient Instances of its Barbarity, they had a dreadful fresh one just before their Eyes, in the miserable Banishment of their Brethren, the *French* Protestants, contrary to all Faith, to all Pity. But, just when every Thing,

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which they feared, was beginning to fall on them in this Nation, and had begun to fall on them in *Ireland*; then it pleased God to endear to us a second Time this Day, by the Landing of our great Deliverer; who succeeded to the Throne, left vacant; and from whom is derived to us, we hope, a perpetual Security in our present happy Establishment.

Moved by this Recital of the dreadful Evils, which religious Intolerance hath committed and attempted; some perhaps may accuse Religion itself, as hurtful to Society. And undoubtedly false Notions of it may be detrimental, and sometimes even pernicious. But so may false Notions of parental Affection, conjugal Tenderness, Gratitude, every Motive to Action. Yet this was never thought an Argument against the Principles themselves. And if any Thing be fitted to do Good and no Harm on Earth, true Religion certainly is. Natural Religion is universally acknowledged to be mild and humane. Christianity indeed some have done their utmost to pervert. But let either the bitterest Zealot, or the most bigotted Infidel, shew, if they can, one Instance, in which the Gospel gives the least Pretence for pious Cruelty. Every where it breathes Mildness, Patience, Forbearance: enjoins Christians, of ever so different Opinions, to receive one another in mutual Charity: and even, of those who are no Christians, it permits us not to judge hardly; much less to use
them

them unmercifully. If then some, who profess this Faith, will act in Defiance to it, let them bear their Condemnation. But to charge their Guilt on Christianity, would be like censuring the legal Constitution of any Government, because they, who rebel against it, behave unjustifiably. For indeed the Spirit of Persecution is Rebellion against Christ, under Pretence of a Commission from him : it is *the Man of Sin, sitting as God in the Temple of God* *. And where it is not designed Impiety, it is the grossest Ignorance, both of the Attributes of our Maker, and the Precepts of our Redeemer, as the Words of the Text expressly declare : *These Things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me.* And the Remedy for this Evil is, not casting off the Regard, which we owe to God, but establishing just and worthy Notions of his Service in the Minds of Men : which, in Proportion as they prevail, will banish Enthusiasm and Superstition from off the Earth : whereas, if true Religion be once lost, every absurd Opinion, as well as mischievous Practice, may spring up in its stead. If Atheism could take Place, it must visibly be the Ruin of Society. But it cannot. There is an irresistible Bent in the human Mind to reverence an invisible Power : and if Men are not directed to do it in a right Manner, they will do it in a wrong. Therefore the certain Consequence of abandoning true Piety, is becom-

* 1 Theff. ii. 3, 4.

ing a Prey to false. And accordingly the Emissaries of the Church of *Rome* have never been either more active, or more successful, than since the astonishing Increase of Profaneness, and Indifference to Religion, amongst us, have given them so unguarded an Opening for the re-establishing their ancient Dominion.

Still how unjust soever it may be to think hardly of Christianity on their Account, yet at least these Corrupters of it, perhaps we may think, cannot well be abhorred too much, or treated too severely. But God forbid, that we should imitate, however provoked, what we condemn; or charge on every particular Papist, what we cannot but charge on Popery in general. Many of them doubtless are well-meaning Persons, from whom both the Principles, and the Practices above mentioned, are concealed, as much as ever they can, by artful Disguises, or bold Denials; and who think in their Consciences, that nothing should induce Them to commit the Crimes, of which their Forefathers have been accused. Yet notwithstanding, were that Authority, in which they profess an implicit Faith, to command their Assistance in ever so wicked an Enterprize, at a critical Juncture; on what Grounds the most unwilling of them all could refuse, one doth not see. In the mean while indeed they may be much better Persons, than their Religion, did they know the Depths of it,
would

would allow them to be. And even amongst the worst of them, great Numbers may be intitled to our Saviour's Plea for his Crucifiers: *Father forgive them: for they know not what they do* *. But such ignorant Zeal, though it alleviates their Guilt, increases the Danger from them: and they must allow Communities of a different Faith, to defend themselves against that Danger most watchfully.

Ours hath done it by penal Statutes, terrible in Appearance, but extorted by the Necessity of the Times; and so entirely suspended, as that Necessity lessened, that they, who have every where broke through all Laws, divine and human, to destroy the Protestant Religion, without sparing it in a single Instance, where they could suppress it with Safety, have long enjoyed unmolested the Exercise of their own, notwithstanding so many legal Provisions to the contrary, notwithstanding their numerous Attempts against former Government, notwithstanding their general Refusal to own and give Security to the present. God forbid, that we should envy them this Indulgence: God grant, they may learn to imitate our Mildness! Of that indeed there is little Hope. Yet still let Us continue to act, as Christians ought; and add to the publick Lenity of our Superiors, every prudent Instance of kind Behaviour in private Life: never indeed affecting or entering

* Luke xxiii. 34.

into dangerous Intimacies with them, but never giving needless Provocation, even to the worst; much less grieving the better-minded, by upbraiding Remembrances of past Things. Let us in every other Respect absolutely forget all, that they have done or attempted: only not forget due Thankfulness to God, that they have not succeeded hitherto; and due Precaution that they may not succeed hereafter; either by open Force, or such private Arts of increasing the Number of their Profelytes, as may enable them to use Force when they will. For the Spirit of that Church, though studiously concealed, is still the same. Not one of the vilest Actions, done to serve it, have they ever by publick Authority condemned, liberal as they are of Condemnations in other Cases; not one of the most extravagant Claims, made in Favour of it, have they ever disowned. And they cannot disown with common Modesty, though they force themselves to do it sometimes, that they hold all Promises and Oaths to be void, which they make to the Prejudice of their Religion or Church: for it is the express Language of their infallible Guides, their Popes and their Councils. It is very true, their Practices of late have not been so enormous, as formerly: the Temper of Mankind is milder; their Influences on the Princes of the Earth is less; and they have the Wisdom not to threaten, while they cannot strike. But remember, our Days have known the bloody Executions of
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Thorn, and the merciless Banishments of *Saltzburg*; the Inquisition of *Spain* subsists in its full Force; the Imprisonments, the Confiscations, the Inslaving, the Murdering of our Protestant Brethren in *France*, have been revived within these few Years, with the bitterest Fury, though entirely unprovoked. And if we will trust those, who continue to shew, by such Marks, what they are; our Folly will deserve every Thing, which we can suffer.

Now what have we to secure us from all the Errors, and all the Cruelties, of this most corrupt and tyrannical Church? Not one Thing, under God, but the Support of the Government, which we now enjoy; and have seen attacked by a formidable Rebellion, in Favour of a bigotted Member of that Communion. How then shall we support, and strengthen effectually, an Establishment, so essential to our Happiness? By hearty and active Loyalty, honest and disinterested publick Spirit, firm and friendly Union: but above all, by serious Repentance, and Amendment of our Ways, with fervent Prayers to the great Disposer of all Things for his Protection. And may it please him to deliver us, in Time to come, as, blessed be his Name, he hath in Time past; not for our Righteousness, but for his own Mercies Sake: to *break the Power of the Ungodly and Malicious* *; abolish Persecu-

* Ps. x. 17.

360 *A Sermon preached on the, &c.*

tion, Tyranny and Injustice, amongst Men ;
and graciously hasten the promised Time, when
the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the
Leopard lie down with the Kid : when none
shall hurt or destroy in all his holy Mountain ;
for the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of
the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

• Is. xi. 6, 9.

S E R-

S E R M O N XIV.

Preached in the Parish-Church of St.
Mary, Lambeth, Oct. 25, 1761.

T I T. iii. 1, 2.

*Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities
and Powers, to obey Magistrates; to be ready
to every good Work:*

*To speak evil of no Man; to be no Brawlers,
but gentle; shewing all Meekness unto all
Men.*

THIS is the first Anniversary of the Day,
on which we lost, very unexpectedly, a
Sovereign, under whose just and mild and pru-
dent Administration we had lived, in Free-
dom, Safety, and Plenty, above thirty-three
Years. The Mercy of Providence, unworthy
as we are of it, hath filled his Place with a
most pious and gracious, amiable and respect-
able Prince; who hath hitherto given us Cause
to hope, from his Government, for every
Thing that we can wish. Our joint Thanks-
givings have just now, with the greatest Rea-
son, been offered up to God for so important
a Blessing; together with our earnest Prayers,
which indeed we repeat as often as we assem-
ble

ble here, for his long Life and Prosperity. But the most acceptable Expression of our Gratitude will be, to perform, every one of us, diligently the several Duties of loyal Subjects, that belong to our respective Stations. And these the Passage of Scripture, which I have read to you, comprehends so fully, and ranges them in so natural an Order, that explaining and enforcing the Precepts of it, as they lie there, will give a sufficient View of all that is incumbent on us in this Matter.

Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates. These Phrases have the same Meaning: only the Variety of them serves to set forth the Obligation the more completely, and press it the more earnestly: as indeed there are few, that deserve a greater Regard.

Human Kind, from early Ages, have lived collected into large Numbers: and our Nature and Circumstances plainly require, that we should. We experience an inward Propension to assemble and unite: and are by the Faculty of Speech peculiarly qualified for it. We have many Affections, and the Seeds of many Virtues, planted in us; which a more solitary Life would give us very little Room to exercise or cultivate: and many Wants and Necessities belong to our Condition, which nothing can tolerably well supply, but an extensive Intercourse of Man with Man. We cannot

cannot therefore either improve or enjoy ourselves, as God designed, but in Society: and Society cannot subsist, without a due Subordination of one Part of it to another; that is, without Government and Obedience. The Appetites, the Passions, the Caprices of Men, would be always leading them to disquiet their Neighbours, if they were not restrained by Authority. And a publick Direction is further necessary, both for Defence against external Dangers, and for establishing inward Order in the Community. For even the best meant Endeavours of each Particular for the general Benefit, would be almost always ineffectual, and often prejudicial, unless they were conducted by the general Wisdom. Then besides, the civil Power is eminently useful, by the Sanctions of its Laws, to what concerns us yet more nearly, the Reformation of our Morals, and bettering our Tempers. For though Rewards and Punishments have no immediate Efficacy to make a Change within: yet regulating our Behaviour will of course by Degrees contribute to mend our Hearts. Human Laws indeed cannot extend to all our Actions: but to many of the most material they can: putting it out of Men's Power to do the Evil, which else they would, or stopping them short before they are gone far: *saving* some *by Fear* *, making others wise by Experience, extirpating the Incorrigible; and obliging every one to set all around him a Pat-

* Jude Ver. 23.

tern of innocent and regular Living. But then lastly, as a right Belief in God, and his various Dispensations towards Men, promotes, beyond all Things, both the Virtue and the Happiness of Mankind ; another chief Advantage of good Government is, that whereas without it, most Men would either through Ignorance be destitute of religious Principles, or by their own Folly, or the Fraud of others, led into absurd and pernicious ones : it kindly makes Provision for them of a rational Method of Instruction and Worship : not obtruding it on them by Force, but proposing and recommending it, which will always suffice : and thus they are guarded, at once, from the dreadful Evils both of Impiety and Superstition ; and carefully taught to discharge the Duties, and bear the Afflictions, of human Life.

Government therefore being so powerfully conducive to the Attainment of these most valuable Ends, which doubtless our Maker designed to be attained, the Establishment of it in the World ought consequently to be regarded, as a most important Law of God and Nature, directly flowing from the Constitution of Things. And what Reason teaches, Revelation expressly confirms : declaring, that the civil Power is *the Ordinance of God* ; and They, who exercise it, *His Ministers of Good to Men* * : from which Premises the Apostle's Conclusion in the same Place is undeniable :

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 4.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience Sake *. Whoever then refuses due Submission to the Authority, which Providence hath placed him peaceably under; though we ought to judge of him as charitably as with Reason we can, if he pleads Conscience for it; is, at least undesignedly, guilty of disobeying the Appointment of Heaven, in a Matter of the utmost Consequence to the Good of Mankind. I do not, by this, enjoin Obedience to whatever Power may start up, and maintain itself, in Times of publick Confusion, for a while, by the Sword: but to such only, as is fully and quietly settled, and acknowledged by the general Consent of the Community. Our Duty becomes such, in this Case, only for the Sake of our common Good. And therefore, not they, who think they ought, and say they would protect us, but they who can and do, are to be owned and obeyed. The Nature of the Thing, and the frequent Vicissitudes of human Affairs, requires absolutely, that this be the Rule; and all the World have ever admitted it, excepting a Handful of Persons in our own Age and Country; who undoubtedly deserve both Pity and Esteem, so far as they go upon Principle; but whose Notions, were they to spread, would produce inextricable Confusion throughout the Earth.

And very happily Scripture is as clear in this Point, as Reason. *There is no Power, saith*

* Rom. xiii. 5.

St. Paul, but of God: the Powers that be, the several Governments actually subsisting in each Nation, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God *. Again, *St. Peter directs all Christians to submit themselves to every Ordinance of Man, every human Establishment, for the Lord's Sake: for so is the Will of God* †. And accordingly they did so from the Beginning of the Gospel: and amidst as many Usurpations and bad Titles, in the *Roman Empire*, as the History of any Nation hath ever recorded, followed no other Maxim, than that of obeying faithfully the Authority, to which the Wisdom of Heaven, superintending all Things, from Time to Time subjected them. But when Persons have owned a Government, not only by receiving and claiming the Benefits of it, but by taking solemn Oaths to it, and joining in publick Prayers for its Preservation: one or both of which I presume we have all done, these additional Ties render Disloyalty afterwards, gross Perfidy and abandoned Profligateness.

We cannot then reasonably doubt, to whom our Submission is due: and we can seldom, if ever, doubt, at least in any Point that will affect our Practice, how far it is to be carried. If our Superiors command us to do any Thing, which we cannot lawfully, *we ought to obey God rather than Men* ‡. But otherwise we

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2. † 1 Pet. ii. 13, 15. ‡ Acts v. 29.

are

are to act as they require us : and if they treat us hardly, or manage the Concerns of the Nation wrongly, we are to bear it with Patience. For consider : the Affairs of Government are always numerous and difficult : sometimes uncommonly intangled and perplexed. They, who manage them, are liable to the same Mistakes, subject to the same Passions, and exposed to more Temptations, than other Men. Therefore not only Miscarriages and ill Accidents will happen ; but Neglects and Failures, Partialities and Grievances, must be expected in the Behaviour of publick Persons, as well as private. And whoever will not sit down contented under some Things of this Sort, resolves in effect never to be contented at all, and demands a Perfection from others, to which he cannot pretend himself. But then further, as there will be always something amiss in political Conduct, so there will always, either through ill Design or Ignorance or Inconsiderateness, be Fault found with Actions that deserve it not ; or the Blame laid where it should not. And though Mismanagements ought certainly to be rectified, when they can by lawful and prudent Methods ; and they who attempt this are intitled both to candid Interpretation, and in Cases of Moment, to Assistance, from others : yet they should examine themselves very strictly, and all who are concerned should examine with Care, not only whether they design well, but whether they consider impartially, and judge rightly ;

rightly ; whether they use allowable Means to attain their imagined good Ends ; and whether, on the whole, they are not more likely to do Harm, than Service.

But supposing Opposition made with all these Precautions, which it seldom is ; and yet made ineffectually : if the Point be of any great Consequence, without Question it is very unhappy. Yet still, having Recourse to violent Measures would bring on so many obvious Mischiefs, and for the most Part such Multitudes of unforeseen ones too, with so much Uncertainty of making Things better, and so dreadful a Chance of making them one Way or another worse, that every wise as well as good Man, if the Case be in any Degree tolerable, will much rather chuse, to wait for a Remedy from the Providence of God, than think of applying desperate ones of his own.

There is indeed a Possibility, which, but for a peculiar Case which was our own, it would scarce be proper to mention, that Government may be so entirely perverted from its original Design, by some, who share in it ; such exorbitant Powers usurped, and so destructive an Use made of them, that the Duty of Obedience must give Way to that of Self-preservation. But this can be only when the Necessity is extreme, and the Evil insupportable ; the Danger of it imminent, and by every

every other Way unavoidable; the Relief confessedly real, and visibly within reach. Such were the Circumstances of our Fathers at the Revolution. But Persons are not to imagine, that such frequently happen; or that any Thing like them happens, as often as they fancy; or even feel, a few Inconveniencies; but to bear them, were they many and heavy, with a virtuous Patience and sacred Regard to the publick Tranquillity. For certainly the Government of the cruel and vicious Emperor *Nero* was extremely bad, when *St. Paul*, notwithstanding, enjoined so strongly dutiful Obedience to it, as you may read in the thirteenth Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*. How religiously then, and how cheerfully, ought We to obey those, who have the Rule over us: since undeniably the Truth is, and long Experience ought to extinguish all Suspicion to the contrary, that they have not the least Design of hurting us in any one Respect, but a sincere Desire of securing and promoting all our Interests, domestick and foreign: that almost all the Inconveniencies, which we have suffered, and the Burdens, that we undergo, have arisen from the Wickedness or Folly of the Nations round us, or from our own: that our established Religion is purer, our Liberty greater, our Property safer, than that of any other People upon Earth: that whatever in our Condition may want to be rectified and improved, we may do it by peaceful Methods, whenever we agree upon it;

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that we have no one good Effect to promise ourselves from disloyal Attempts; but a sure Prospect, were they to succeed, of every Evil of every Kind, to ourselves and our Posterity.

In the second Part of the Text, the Apostle proceeds from Obedience, the primary Duty of Subjects, as such, to the other, and consequential Parts of their Behaviour under Government. And here his first Rule is a very comprehensive one, that they *be ready to every good Work*: in general, to fulfil all the Obligations of Life; in particular, those of their own Station. An universal Regard to Religion and Piety, Justice and Benevolence, Sobriety and Temperance, is the very Ground-work of social Happiness. It gives Courage and Spirit, Health and Plenty; Trust and Union at home, Respect and Honour abroad: it keeps Prosperity from being dangerous, and fills Adversity with Comfort and Hope. But then, besides the common Ties, which bind all Men, the Apostle includes in this Precept, what he could not so well mention singly, the particular Ties of each Man, belonging to his respective Situation and Employment. It requires therefore, that Persons in Authority be faithful to their Trust, watchful and diligent, upright and disinterested; or to speak in the Language of Scripture, *Men of Truth, fearing God, bating Covetousness**: that Persons of

* Exod. xviii. 21.

Quality and Fortune acknowledge their Subjection to the same Laws, human and divine, with their Inferiors; and be careful to use the advantageous Ground, upon which they stand, chiefly to pour down Benefits, and shed abroad good Influences, on all beneath them: and lastly, that those, who are of lower Estate, be content with their Condition, yet industrious by honest Means to better it; pay Respect to their Superiors in Word and Deed, proportionably to their Degree, and *render to all their Dues; Fear, to whom Fear is due, Honour, to whom Honour* *. Thus, by a regular Subordination and mutual Serviceableness, every one will concur to make the Weight of Government easy to those, who sustain it; and the Benefits great to all, that are placed under it. And the Blessing of Heaven will not fail to crown the virtuous Endeavours of such a People with Success.

But though every good Work is beneficial to Society, and every sinful one detrimental: yet some Sins are more directly pernicious, than others: and require a more especial Caution to be given against them. Such are the two, which usually go together, Calumny and Faction. These therefore the Apostle prohibits especially, in the following Part of the Text: *To speak evil of no Man, to be no Brawlers.*

* Rom. xiii. 7.

The original Word, in the former of these Rules, being that, from which the Name of Blasphemy is derived, commonly denotes in Scripture, using reproachful Language of those, who are peculiarly intitled to Respect and Reverence: as, in the first Place, the great God; and, in a lower Sense, Persons who bear his Authority on Earth. Considering therefore, to what Point the Passage before us relates, we must apprehend this Injunction to be directed principally against the Wickedness of such, as *St. Peter* saith *are not afraid*, or, translating literally, *do not tremble, to speak evil of Dignities* *: where again the Word is, *to blaspheme*. Here then *St. Paul* must be understood to command, that we neither allow ourselves, nor encourage others, in disrespectful and injurious Expressions concerning our Rulers, whether supreme or subordinate: but preserve in our own Minds, and those of all Men, so far as we can, that Honour and Regard for them, which is the strongest Bond of Government, of Peace and Order. In Charity it must be supposed, that few of the many, who violate this Precept, do it with ill Design. But at best, for Persons to entertain and spread Notions to the Disadvantage of their Superiors, which, in the Case of an Equal to whom they wished well, they would immediately see were groundless, and, it may be, absurd, is a very criminal Thoughtlessness; and often produces most unhappy Effects. There-

* 2 Pet. ii. 10.

fore,

fore, when we hear such Things said, we should always reflect, how many there are, whom Prepossession, or Interest, or Resentment, may induce to report Untruths or Uncertainties; how many others do the same Thing from mere Wantonness of Invention, or Desire to appear knowing; and indeed, how easily Facts, or material Circumstances, are, without Intention, misrelated or misunderstood. We should call to mind, whether we have not, perhaps more than once before now, been led into a firm Belief of many a Story, for which we have afterwards been convinced there was never the least Foundation; and learn from thence a prudent Distrust for the future. Nay further still, before we pass our Judgment so freely on the Characters of publick Persons, and the Administration of publick Affairs, we should spend a little Time in judging ourselves; and considering well, not only whether we are so impartial and candid as we ought, but whether we have indeed a sufficient Capacity, and sufficient Information, to determine at all about such Matters. Unless we can be sure of this, about which Multitudes, we find, are daily mistaken; we should be very fearful of venturing beyond our Depth; or, in Scripture Language, *exercising ourselves in great Matters, which are too high for us* *; and ought in many Cases to go but little further, than our good Wishes and Prayers: leaving the rest to those that are intrusted with

* Pf. cxxxi. 2.

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it, and studying to be quiet, and do our own
Business *.

But reproachful Discourse, though our Superiors be spared in it, is fully mischievous enough, to deserve being included, as doubtless the Apostle designed it should, in his general Prohibition of Evil-speaking. Private Quarrels, arising from this Source, have often produced very fatal publick Diffensions. And were it never to have that ill Effect, it would still have many others of the worst Kind. The good Opinion of those, amongst whom we live, is by Nature, and with great Reason, extremely dear to us: and robbing us of it is taking from us one of the chief Things, that make Life agreeable. Every one feels this in his own Case. No Injury occasions bitterer Uneasiness, or keener Resentments; yet none is more frequently done: not only in Anger, which however, were it the best grounded in the World, is by no Means an Excuse for saying just what one will; but in perfect Good-humour, heedlessly and gaily, and for mere Want of something else to say. An Offence, committed with so little Scruple, is usually retaliated with just as little. And thus the cruellest and most barbarous Imputations, sometimes obliquely hinted at, others directly spoken out, make up a great Part of the Entertainment of Conversation. They, who pretend to condemn them, hearken to

* 1 Theff. iv. 11.

them,

them, and repeat them notwithstanding: and almost every Body goes on, more or less, contributing their Share to what they complain of, all the while, most heavily. Now though all the ill Things, that we tell of others, were true; yet both Christian Charity, and common Humanity, would forbid the needless Publication of them. And one should think private Interest too might incline us to set the Example of such Forbearance: as we ourselves either have, or may have, Occasion for gentle Treatment in return, and a friendly Veil to be drawn over our Failings. But if a Report of this Kind be false; then the raising it, and in Proportion the carrying it on, is doing a most hainous Injury to an innocent Person; which may spread we know not how far, and last we know not how long, and do him we know not what Harm; without our being able, were we willing afterwards, to restore to him, at all completely, the good Name that we have taken from him: which yet we must heartily endeavour to do, whatever Shame we may bring upon ourselves by it, before we can hope for our Maker's Forgiveness.

The second Prohibition of the Apostle is levelled against the vehement Spirit of Party and Faction: *To be no Brawlers*, not contentious. Doubtless there may be Differences of Opinion and Conduct, about national Concerns, of such Importance, that every one ought to interest himself in them, and even zealously.

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But

But then it should be done upon reasonable Grounds; and without Passion or Bitterness. We should imagine nothing to be of greater Moment, than it really is. We should neither speak nor think worse of the opposite Side, than we find, on a cool Inquiry, they deserve: we should judge of no Man's Character, by the hurtful Consequences, either of his Notions or his Behaviour; if there be any Reason to think, that he doth not see them: we should on no Account violate the Laws of Truth, Justice and Humanity, to distress the most obstinate Adversary; or to gain the most favourite and material Point. In Matters of more Indifference, the Contest, if there is any, should in all Reason be carried on with less Warmth: and every one be freely allowed, to follow his own Way of Thinking, and promote the Interest of his own Friends, without Offence. To this equitable Temper we should first form our own Minds, and then study to introduce it amongst others: making it our Business to diminish the Subject, and narrow the Bounds, of Contention; and each labouring to abate the Vehemence of his own Side, with whom he may hope to have Credit. But how small soever his Success may be in that, each may at least watch over himself: be on his Guard against over-great Credulity; resist the Temptation of countenancing serviceable Falsehoods; avoid, as much as possible, whatever may seem an unkind Action, and most resolutely abstain from doing an unjust

just one. For whatever is dishonourable and base, ill-natured or uncharitable, in our Opposers, is so in Us: neither our Passions, nor our Interests, nor the common Practice of the World, is the proper Rule of our Behaviour, or will justify it another Day before the holy Judge of the whole Earth. All these Things are extremely plain: every Body owns them: yet few or none regard them. Bad Persons have their Ends to serve by transgressing Bounds: very good Persons are enticed, or provoked, to go on insensibly much further than they should: and each Side is so full of Indignation at the Faults of the other, that they overlook their own entirely. The Consequence of this is, that almost every Body applying what is said against the Iniquities of Party, not at all to reform themselves, but solely to load their Adversaries with Imputations, they grow worse by what is intended to make them better: whereas we should learn from the Failings of others, whom we are but too like, to examine, whether we are not guilty of some of the same: and readily grant mutual Forgiveness to those common Errors, which we have all great Need to be forgiven by our Maker. Thus we should soon quiet and subdue this evil Spirit: which in private Life makes Men disagreeable and injurious, intemperate and riotous, idle and negligent of their proper Business: and whilst it fills their Minds with other Distinctions, of-

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ten unmeaning, yet always mischievous: destroys from off the Earth, in Proportion as it prevails, the most important and necessary of all Distinctions, that between good Persons and bad. For amongst the Zealots on every Side, the lowest and the vilest Creature, that is useful to their Cause, or even but noisy for it, shall meet with high Favour: and the Worthiest who opposes them, be it ever so fairly and decently, be it in ever so great a Trifle, or for ever so strong Reasons, shall not only be slighted, but ill treated and abhorred. Then for publick Affairs: the Effect of this unhappy Temper on Them is, if possible, still worse. The End of Society and Government is to unite Men in promoting their general Interest: and the Aim of Party is to disunite them entirely. The whole Study of each Faction is to advance their own separate Strength, overlooking the publick Welfare; to prevent the other from doing any Thing beneficial or popular, to deceive or force them into Measures absurd and pernicious; then to accuse them for the Omissions or Mistakes, nay the unavoidable Inconveniencies, of which the Accusers themselves have been the Cause. Thus they labour unweariedly the Ruin one of another: and too frequently, rather than fail of it, will risque, or even contrive, the Ruin of the whole. For this wicked Vehemence increases in Men by unexpected and astonishing Degrees: and the wisest, when they
once

once give Way to it, cannot foresee how far it may carry them, amidst such a Number of Things to provoke, or entice, or entangle them so, that they may come to do at length, what they least thought of, nay, what they most abominated. But though party Quarrels produce every where very hurtful Consequences; yet, as they have Room for rising to the greatest Heights, so they are capable of doing the greatest Harm, in Countries of civil and religious Freedom: the Happiness of which, though on all other Accounts invaluable, is grievously subject to this one Alloy; that the bold and active Spirit, which naturally accompanies Liberty, hurries Men on, in various Instances, to wild Behaviour; and particularly carries publick Disputes to most immoral and dangerous Lengths. Here therefore *St. Paul's Advice* * is of the utmost Importance. God be thanked, that we have followed it much better of late, than formerly: and God grant, that we never relapse into wrong Behaviour on this Head again. *Brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty: only use not Liberty for an Occasion to the Flesh, but by Love serve one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word: Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

* Gal. v. 14, 15, 16.

This

This Rule of being mutually serviceable by Love, is the same, in Effect, with that, which the last Words of the Text prescribe; that we should be *gentle, shewing all Meekness unto all Men*. Our Passions frequently prompt us, not only to do the contrary, but even to defend it. And yet one should think it might be easily seen, that a Proneness to resent and disoblige, take Things amiss, and do Things for others to take amiss, whatever ill-natured Pleasure there may be in it just at the Time, is neither a happy, nor a virtuous Disposition: much less one allowed by the Gospel towards *our Brethren, for whom Christ died**: but that indulging it must gradually sour our Tempers, hurt our Healths, at least destroy our Comfort: besides the ample Return for it, that we shall be too likely to meet with from the World; and the dreadful Guilt, that we incur by it in the Sight of God. So that whatever Difference of Interests there may be in other Respects, yet in one Point the Interest of all Men is clearly the same: that Gentleness and Meekness be exercised, Good-nature and obliging Behaviour studiously cultivated. This is not only the Way to enjoy Life, but to act rightly in it. Such a Turn of Mind will enable us, and no other can, to judge reasonably both of Things and Persons; to discern how far Men's Ac-

* Rom. xiv. 15.

tions and Designs are justifiable or otherwise : and what Allowance ought to be made, as often surely not a little ought, for early Prejudices, warm Passions, strong Provocations, alluring Prospects, easy Mistakes, and undesigned Neglects. Then further, preserving our own Tempers calm is the surest Method to compose and win upon others : to open their Eyes, to conciliate their Esteem ; and, which is the great Point, that we should have in our View, to make all worthy Persons on all Sides, of whom it may be hoped there are many more, than we can sometimes believe, agree with one another in whatever is of Importance, and bear with one another in whatever is not. With the utmost Reason therefore did the Apostle give this Direction in the last Place, of *shewing all Meekness unto all Men*, as finishing the Character of a good Subject, and providing completely for the Happiness of a Nation : that every one should *follow the Things, which make for Peace* * ; carry himself with Humanity, and prudent Friendliness, to each of his Fellow-subjects, without Exception ; moderate his justest Zeal with equal Charity ; and copy, in the whole of his Conduct, that most beautiful and excellent Character of *Mordecai*, in the last Verse of the Book of *Esther* ; that he was *accepted of the Multitude of his Brethren, seeking the Wealth of*

* Rom. xiv. 19.

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his People, and speaking Peace to all his Seed.
God grant us to be every one thus minded;
and reward us with his Blessings, on our-
selves, our King and the whole Royal Fa-
mily, through *Jesus Christ*, our Lord. A-
men.

F I N I S.

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